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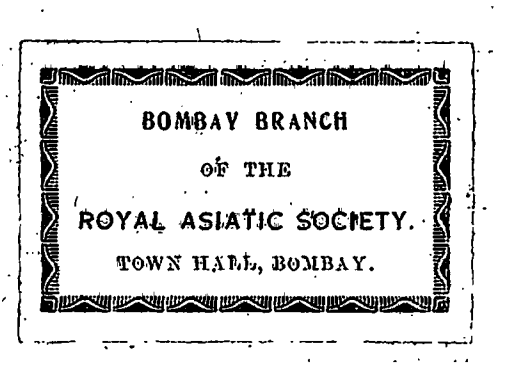

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LETTERS

CHIEFLY FROM

INDIA;

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CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

MILITARY TRANSACTIONS

ON THE

COAST OF MALABAR,

DURING THE LATE WAR;

TOGETHER WITH

A SHORT DESCRIPTION

OF THE

RELIGION, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS,

OF THE

INHABITANTS OF HINDOSTAN.

By JOHN LE COUTEUR, Esq.

CAPTAIN IN HIS MAJESTY'S HUNDREDTH REGIMENT OF FOOT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, No 32, FLEET-STREET.

M,DCC,XC.

1795

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THE

TRANSLATOR's PREFACE.

THE following letters are the production of a young officer, a native of the Iſland of Jerſey, who ſerved in India during the late war. They are written in a lively, pleaſant ſtyle; but what in a particular manner entitles them to the attention of the public is the impartial narrative they contain of events highly intereſting and important. To many of theſe the author was himſelf an eye-

witneſs; and of the reſt he was enabled, from being on the ſpot, to collect the fulleſt and moſt authentic accounts. His own obſervation furniſhed him with the ſketch he has given of the manners, cuſtoms, and ſuperſtitions of the Hindoos; and though this part of his work may not deſerve the praiſe of originality, it certainly has the merit of being an uſeful and amuſing ſubſtitute for more voluminous performances on thoſe ſubjects. The ſevere critick may, perhaps, condemn ſeveral of the letters in which the author, aſſuming the character of a philoſopher, has advanced opinions, either not admiſſible, or requiring the ſupport of ſtronger arguments than he has thought proper to uſe. But it ſhould be remembered that youth is ſanguine, and that the love of truth, though a powerful ſtimulus to the purſuit of diſcoveries in ſcience, does not always ſecure us from falling

falling into error. Beſide, allowances ſhould be made for his profeſſional ſituation: the life of a ſoldier in the field is a ſcene of perpetual action, in which little ſpace is allowed for abſtruſe ſpeculations either in moral or natural Philoſophy. Every page of the book breathes the ſpirit of humanity; and the affecting account he has given of the oppreſſion under which the Hindoos are groaning from the tyranny of their native Princes, is followed by reflections which every lover of liberty, every advocate for the indefeaſible rights of men, will read with pleaſure and applauſe.

With regard to the tranſlation, it is incumbent upon me to declare, that it is not ſcrupulouſly literal: the copiouſneſs, or rather the verboſcneſs of the author's ſtyle,

added

added to a certain Gallic air, *which pervades the whole work, induced me to take ſome liberties with my original, which I conceived might improve it in the tranſlation, and render it more congenial to the taſte of an Engliſh reader. I have altered, added, and omitted; but in every inſtance, with the greateſt care, that the full meaning and ſpirit of my author ſhould be faithfully preſerved. To point out the paſſages I have attempted to improve would be, at beſt, but an unprofitable labour: to thoſe who* will *compare the tranſlation with the original, it would be ſuperfluous; and to thoſe who* will not, *a liſt of* trifling errors in grammar or logic, *as I ſhould have occaſion to give, would be equally tedious and unentertaining.*

I ſhall

I ſhall conclude this preface with obſerving that, whatever defects may be found in the work, the author cannot be accuſed of impoſing on the public what he did not write: neither did he employ an aſſiſtant to make up a book from the works of others, in order to paſs it afterwards on his readers as an original compoſition.

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LETTERS ON INDIA.

LETTER I.

St. Jago, 24th April, 1781.

To you, who are accuſtomed to reflect on every ſubject, a voyage to India, with obſervations on the nature of the climate, and the manners and uſages of the inhabitants, differing almoſt altogether from ours in Europe, cannot but be agreeable under whatever form it may be preſented. With this view I have determined to keep a detailed journal of every intereſting particular, and to convey to you, at all convenient opportunities, as much as will come within the compaſs of a letter. I am apprehenſive I ſhall appear to you

greatly inferior to thoſe who have hitherto engaged in ſimilar undertakings, ſince you will find neither that delicacy, nor that depth, by which their writings are diſtinguiſhed; and will ſee little to admire, either in my ſtyle, or choice of ideas. But, whilſt the generality of theſe authors paint from the imagination, or repeat what others have ſaid many times before, I ſhall at leaſt have the merit of having been on the ſpot, and of deſcribing the different objects ſuch as they will appear to me. This will, I hope, attract your attention, and give me ſome claim to your thanks.

It is my intention, in theſe letters, to preſent you with a faithful account of the hoſtile events which may take place in India, and the conſequences by which they will neceſſarily be followed. I ſhall diſguiſe nothing, but ſhall expreſs my ſentiments freely of the political and military conduct on our ſide, of our generals, and all thoſe who may have any

ſhare

ſhare in the command. In a word, I ſhall advance nothing which will not be ſtrictly conformable to the truth of which I ſhall be an eye-witneſs, or which will not be founded on the moſt inconteſtable authorities.

This is the firſt place at which we have touched ſince our departure from Portſmouth. It is not our intention to continue long here; as ſoon as our ſoldiers ſhall have recovered a little from the fatigues of the voyage, and the neceſſary refreſhments taken on board, we ſhall ſet ſail for the Cape. Whilſt my fellow-voyagers are either buſied in making the neceſſary preparations for our departure, or enjoying a neceſſary relaxation, I ſhall buſy myſelf in giving you ſome idea of the nature of the country, and the manners and government of thoſe who inhabit it.

St. Jago, one of the principal Cape de Verd Iſlands, is poſſeſſed by the Portugueſe. Its ſoil is excellent, not-

withſtanding we ſee all the land untilled. The inhabitants agree that a little cultivation would render it extremely fertile, but their ſtupidity is aſtoniſhing. When one endeavours to excite in them a ſpirit of induſtry, or when they are aſked why they do not avail themſelves of the advantages of their ſituation, they are at a loſs for a reply. The cauſes of their inactivity, however, are eaſy to be traced: they groan, from their infancy, under the moſt rigid exactions; by degrees they loſe every idea of *property*; and they wiſh rather to continue indolent, than to ſee the fruits of their labour paſs into the hands of a tyrant.

Their climate affords them exquiſite fruits, which would be in great abundance, did they take care to cultivate them. The ſugar canes, which ſpring up ſpontaneouſly in different places, ſufficiently indicate what the iſland, in good hands, would be capable of. The graſs in the foreſt and meadows ſupplies nouriſhment

riſhment to the cattle; and theſe are very numerous. It is a matter of indifference to their keeper, whether he remains in his hut, or repoſes under the ſhade of a tree. All cultivation is confined to the growing of potatoes, yams, and a few other vegetables, which are, however, very ſcarce, becauſe no one raiſes more than he wants for his own immediate uſe. Cotton grows here perfectly well, and would be a very advantageous article if it could be freed from its preſent reſtrictions: it is forbid, on pain of death, to diſpoſe of it, unleſs to the governor, who allows a trifle for it, ſometimes nothing. Thus is this iſland ſunk into ſuch contempt, that an honeſt man would bluſh to take upon him its government.

The preſent governor is an old man, who was baniſhed from Portugal twenty or thirty years ago, for a crime againſt the ſtate. He was at firſt conſidered as a man of merit, but his cruel and unjuſt treatment of the unhappy people

committed to his charge, ſoon removed the veil, and diſcovered his real character. He loads them with the moſt exorbitant taxes and impoſitions, inſomuch that the poor are frequently obliged to give up to him their laſt mite. Miſery pervades throughout; and the deſpot himſelf, a prey to his avarice, is in a ſtarving condition.—But if, inſtead of oppreſſing thoſe he governs, and weakening the ſprings of induſtry, he were to ſecure the rights and property of each individual; if he were to relinquiſh his exactions, and content himſelf with a juſt and moderate tribute, he would ſoon ſee a noble emulation kindle in every breaſt: the plains would be covered with rich harveſts; the orchards would every where be loaded with all kinds of fruits; ſugar and cotton plantations would ſupply the place of ſteril buſhes; happineſs would beam on every countenance; the public revenues would increaſe daily, and the country become more and more peopled.

The

The ſhips of war which touch here, would be amply ſupplied with proviſions; merchants, attracted by the proſpect of gain, would vie with each other in importing the productions of other countries; riches would pour in from all quarters; and Portugal, provided with a new market for her wines and manufactures, would, probably, regain her former ſplendour. Thus is liberty the ſource of all bleſſings, and the recompenſe of thoſe who afford her protection. In the boſom of liberty the arts ſpring up, acquire ſtrength, and flouriſh: under her auſpices lands are cleared and fertilized; and man aſſumes his proper dignity. What idea then ought we to entertain of thoſe who ſolely employ their power in degrading their fellow-creatures by keeping them under abject and vilifying ſubmiſſion? What can we think of thoſe princes who ſhould be the fathers of their ſubjects, and who yet depute their

authority to maſters ſo unworthy to rule over their fellow-ſubjects.

The governor of St. Jago has an abſolute right over the life, as well as the property, of thoſe who are ſubject to him; but it rarely happens that he condemns any one to death. He is not gratified by the ſight of an unfortunate wretch led to execution: gold is the only idol of his heart; in that all his affections are concentrated, all his wiſhes bounded. If, in ſpite of the precautions he takes to poſſeſs himſelf of the property of each individual, any one ſhould happen to acquire, without his knowledge, a little ſubſtance more than common, he watches his ſteps narrowly on being informed of it, and the ſlighteſt pretext ſuffices to throw the unhappy man into a priſon, from which he is not releaſed till he has ſurrendered all he has ſcraped together for the ſupport of his family, or to ſoften the rigours of old

age.

age. What honour, what probity, what virtue, can we look for under ſuch a government? You will therefore not be ſurpriſed, when I tell you that the inhabitants are knaviſh, cowardly, perfidious, and indolent. Slaves were never virtuous; were they virtuous, they would preſent to us a new and ſingular phenomenon.

But it is pleaſant, you will obſerve, for me to expatiate on theſe ſubjects, and to entertain you with politics, who poſſeſs an information ſo much ſuperior to mine. We will therefore ſhortly quit theſe dry diſcuſſions, and return to the narrative.—I have not yet ſpoken of the women of St. Jago; of the ſex which at once ſtrews flowers and thorns in our path: let us now take a view of them.

The prejudices of infancy blind us to a certain degree, and prevent our ſeeing objects ſuch as they really are. Perhaps I do not render the females of this country all the juſtice to which they are entitled, notwithſtanding I give it as my

opinion

opinion that there are ſome amongſt them who might vie with many of our handſome Engliſh women. It is very probable that the men, born in our climates, have their ſenſes more blunted than the inhabitants of the torrid zone, and that Nature, ever benevolent, and conſtantly employed in the taſk of perpetuating our ſpecies, exalts the beauty of the women in proportion to the difficulties they have to ſurmount in exciting love.

The women here have not all thick lips, a flat noſe, and curling woolly hair on the head. We meet with ſeveral with a charming mouth, a well proportioned noſe, and hair which flows upon the waiſt. They have all, however, one fault; their complexion is black, and their livelieſt paſſions and emotions are ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable. A dry atmoſphere, and a ſun hotter than a burning ſtove, have hardened the ſuperficies of the body. We ſigh in vain for that exquiſite whiteneſs, that glowing vermilion, in which all the affections of the

ſoul

ſoul are painted, and in which the lover witneſſes with tranſport all that paſſes in the heart of his miſtreſs. But do not permit this language to lead you into a perſuaſion that the African women are deſtitute of allurements: Nature penetrates through every thing; and I have ſeen an hundred times in the look, the geſtures, of a black beauty, more grace, and more expreſſion, than in the moſt pathetic diſcourſes. Indeed, if a block of marble can ſeem to live and breathe under the chiſel of the artiſt, why ſhould not love, by far more powerful, be capable of expreſſing, in the cheeks and eyes of a tender negreſs, the tranſports, the troubles, and the inquietudes, inſeparable from that paſſion.

The women of St. Jago dreſs very differently from the ladies of Europe. On their ſhoulders they wear a kind of handkerchief, with which they cover the face on the approach of a ſtranger. But if in paſſing near them one is deprived

prived of a tender glance, or a ſoft ſmile, the loſs is ſufficiently recompenſed in another way: the throne of love is left almoſt uncovered; a piece of thin cloth alone is worn about the waiſt, which the leaſt breath of wind blows aſide, and preſents a raviſhing *coup d'œil.*

Do not cenſure a cuſtom unqueſtionably founded on public utility. In a country, the wretchedneſs of which conſtantly oppoſes the union of the ſexes, it is reaſonable that the ſex ſhould have recourſe to artifices, capable of awakening the ſentiments which are implanted in every breaſt, and which prudence endeavours to ſtifle. Who, I beſeech you, would otherwiſe furniſh new citizens to the ſtate; who replace the many victims which death ſnatches from us every day, if the men were not tempted to fulfil the duties which Nature impoſes on them? Licurgus formerly called in the aid of the laws to authoriſe what the ladies here nearly perform by inſtinct

ſtinct of themſelves, without being compelled: he obliged the Spartan girls to comply with a cuſtom the beſt calculated to inflame the paſſions of the youths. You cannot have forgotten that they danced naked at the public feaſts: and this practice was rendered ſacred by the preſence even of the old men.

We ſpend our time at St. Jago in the moſt agreeable manner. Averſe to the ſea we find ourſelves, as it were, in paradiſe. It is true no objects preſent themſelves to our view beſide ſteep mountains and vaſt and barren plains: a diſmal ſolitude, which is only enlivened by the ſight of a few ſtraggling herds, and now and then a wretch, whoſe meagre countenance and dejected look announce his miſery. Yet have theſe diſmal objects infinitely more charms to us than the concerts, balls, and plays, we formerly attended in the capital of our native country.

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We are all in health, our proviſions are got on board, and we expect to ſail in a day or two. In my next you ſhall have an account of our paſſage to the Cape. Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER II.

St. Jago, 24th April, 1781.

AN unexpected event has juſt happened, which will keep us ſome time longer here. We conſidered ourſelves in the moſt perfect ſecurity, our ſailors went on ſhore every day, and as little precaution was taken to keep them on board as if it had been a time of profound peace. We were ſurpriſed, however, on the 16th of the preſent month, by a French ſquadron. Commodore Johnſtone's courage and good conduct have been univerſally extolled, and you are not a ſtranger to all that has been publiſhed in his favour. Fluſhed at having obtained a trifling advantage over a French frigate, he repeatedly boaſted in

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the Houſe of Commons, that an Engliſh ſhip of fifty guns was capable of engaging a French ſhip of the line. He probably owes to theſe raſh aſſertions his preſent command of a Britiſh ſquadron. You will now ſee in what manner he has kept his word, and how little he is entitled to the confidence of government. I need not inform you that his ſquadron conſiſts of one ſhip of ſeventy-four guns, one of ſixty-four, three fifties, and three frigates. But, to enable you the better to do him juſtice, I muſt begin by appriſing you of the diſpoſition of our fleet when we were attacked.

It is an invariable cuſtom in the navy to anchor without ſide the ſhips under convoy, in order to be conſtantly in a ſituation to protect them. But, to ſhew that he was not the ſlave of vulgar rules, our commodore was pleaſed to place his ſquadron in ſafety, and to leave the merchant-ſhips to provide for their own ſecurity. Such was our ſituation when the

French

French fleet were within an ace of ſurpriſing us.

One of our tranſports, by ſome accident, had withdrawn to a diſtance from the others on the preceding day, and, perceiving a fleet advance, ſhe gave notice, but was entirely diſregarded. By nine in the morning the Iſis diſcovered the ſhips to belong to the enemy, and repeated the ſignals uſual on ſuch occaſions: at length the commodore deigned to notice them.

In the mean time M. de Suffrein, with five ſhips of the line, and ſeveral frigates and armed veſſels, bore down with all the ſail he could crowd, fully reſolved to attack us. On our parts our ſituation was the moſt deplorable you can imagine: the decks were all covered with proviſions juſt got on board; and caſks of water, ſails, cordage, and cables, were ſcattered confuſedly every where. It was impoſſible to work a ſingle gun. Several of the ſhips had got down their maſts to

repair them; and, to complete our misfortunes, moſt of the ſeamen were on ſhore. The commodore made the ſignal of danger; immediately after the men came on board; and an inconceivable alacrity prevailed throughout. In leſs than half an hour we were attacked; and during this ſhort time we had put ourſelves in a ſtate of defence. Our guns being loaded, and every man at his quarters, we received the enemy with the courage, and *ſang froid* natural to Britiſh ſeamen.

Suffrein was foremoſt to engage, and came on with an intrepidity capable of daunting the ſtouteſt hearts. He fired to the right and left on all he found in his way, but reſerved his lower deck battery for an enemy more ſuitable to his ambition. He was ſcarcely along ſide the Hero, commanded by Captain Hawker, when, reſolved to conquer or periſh in the attempt, he dropped anchor, and a deſperate engagement enſued betwixt the two ſhips. Several of the tranſports inſenſibly

ſenſibly moved more out, and left the poop of Suffrein's ſhip expoſed to the fire of the Iſis. It was impoſſible to contend with two enemies thus advantageouſly ſituated, and the firſt broadſide of the Iſis completely diſabled the French admiral, killed ſeveral of his men, and carried away his rigging.

The veſſel which followed Suffrein ſuffered ſtill more, and found no ſmall difficulty in retreating. She was ſcarcely out of the reach of our ſhips, when ſhe carried away all her maſts, and became a real object of compaſſion. The others, diſheartened by the fate of their companions, gave up all thoughts of coming to action, and contented themſelves, as they gradually retired, with firing a few long ſhots, at random.

Scarcely was the firing over, when the commodore aſſembled the captains to inquire into the ſtate of the fleet. When he had obtained every neceſſary information, he diſmiſſed them, deſiring them to

hold themſelves in readineſs to ſail, at the firſt ſignal he ſhould make for that purpoſe. But if, inſtead of waſting ſo precious a time in idle deliberations, he, who had not himſelf yet been in action, and who conſequently had ſuſtained no damage, had gone out in the Romney, the ſhip on board which his broad pendant was flying, and had taken poſſeſſion of the diſmaſted veſſel, it is probable that Suffrein, who was by no means deficient in courage, would not have been idle, but have tried every expedient to reſcue from us what would have been ſo important a prize. In this caſe both fleets would have rallied, and we ſhould have been certain of a complete victory: but the commodore ſpent the reſt of the day without making the ſmalleſt movement, and gave the enemy time to repair their damages, and to collect their diſperſed fleet.

His conduct has been univerſally condemned. Grave folks have lamented the

the loſs the nation has ſuſtained, and vented the bittereſt cenſures againſt the author of the miſcarriage. Thoſe again of a lively turn, who convert every thing into a jeſt, have been witty on the occaſion. I was in company ſome time ago, when this ſubject was brought on the carpet, and a very young man made the following harangue:

"You blame Johnſtone, and agreeably to your opinion he is deſerving of the moſt condign puniſhment. I do not ſee the matter in the ſame light. Do you think he was ignorant that the French, beaten and terrified as they were, were incapable of reſiſtance? unqueſtionably no: but he was too generous to drive them to extremity. I know this officer; he would have been aſhamed to enrich himſelf with the ſpoils of his enemies, and ſtrictly adhered to the old Trojan maxim,

"—— timeo danaos, donaque ferentes."

To theſe he added ſerious arguments, drawn from the principles of religion.

He remarked, that "the commodore had always conſidered the property of others as a kind of ſubtle poiſon, fatal to thoſe who obtained the poſſeſſion of it. According to this principle had he not reaſon to fear that his ſecuring a veſſel built and equipped at the expenſe of the *grand monarque*, might hereafter have blown up his ſquadron?"

Be this as it may, it is certain that the French ſhips had every opportunity afforded them to retire, and to render each other the ſervices of which they ſtood in need. And if the advantages we gained over them are to be aſcribed to the addreſs of the Engliſh officers, and to the bravery and diligence of the ſeamen, it muſt at the ſame time be acknowledged, that the moderation we obſerved afterwards was owing entirely to our illuſtrious commander. There was not in the fleet another man who would not have

have felt an exquiſite pleaſure in depriving France of the only naval reſource capable of diſturbing our quiet in India.

Johnſtone knew that arguments would avail but little with the public, who would condemn his conduct moſt unmercifully. Therefore, after having long puzzled himſelf in deviſing a variety of means to ſilence their reproaches, he had recourſe to one of the moſt ingenious ſtratagems that can be conceived. In the evening after the engagement, when night began to caſt her veil over the earth, and the enemy, reſuming their courage, were become careleſs and tranquil, he ſet ſail under favour of the duſk, followed by his whole fleet. Now we flattered ourſelves with a complete victory; joy became univerſally diffuſed; honour, glory, and patriotiſm, fired every breaſt; and theſe ſenſations were only interrupted by the apprehenſion that the commodore would not be able to overtake the enemy's fleet. The diſcharge of a few guns at a diſtance

gave us new hopes, and perſuaded us that we were near the completion of our wiſhes. Soon as the day began to break, we, in the tranſports, got to the maſt heads, to diſcover, if poſſible, any traces of the fleet. We continued a long time in this ſituation, impatient at not being able to obſerve them, when at length, towards nine in the morning, they appeared. We were ſo tranſported at the ſight, that not a man amongſt us but thought he could perceive the marks of a deciſive victory. Every one repreſented to himſelf the Engliſh flag flying over the French colours, and glad cries and acclamations were heard on all ſides. But what was our confuſion when we perceived our error? Our joy was converted into mourning; and a deep melancholy, blended with indignation, took poſſeſſion of every mind.

If the conduct of the commodore was as firſt blamed, he found in the ſequel wretches mean enough to undertake his defence.

defence. Notwithſtanding all the arguments they may employ, it is impoſſible to juſtify him in the eyes of an impartial man. He ſuffered himſelf to be nearly ſurpriſed; and how can he be exculpated for leaving the tranſports and merchantmen expoſed to the inſults of any enemy who ſhould think proper to attack them? Why did he neglect the advantages which ſpontaneouſly offered, and not take poſſeſſion of the French ſhips we had driven out of the engagement, and who, having loſt their maſts, were incapable of eſcaping? It does not appear to me that any ſatisfactory reply can be made to theſe queries. It may be ſaid that prudence, and the dread of expoſing his Majeſty's fleet, were ſufficient motives to prevent his taking any offenſive ſtep on this occaſion. That he was not ſent to India to ſpill the blood of his countrymen, but to preſerve our poſſeſſions there, and to add to theſe the conqueſt of the Cape of Good Hope: that the ſmalleſt

miſcarriage

miſcarriage might have been attended by the worſt conſequences, deſtroy the proſpects before us, lead to the ruin of our provinces, and cauſe the entire loſs of a flouriſhing trade, the ſource of our opulence.

I am by no means a friend to the raſh and unthinking, and ſhall never undertake the defence of a man inveſted with a command, who throws himſelf headlong into danger, and when he miſcarries imputes his defeat to a blind deſtiny that preſides over all human affairs. I reſerve all my admiration for the wiſe and circumſpect commander, who never loſes ſight of the intereſts of his country, who takes every fair and palpable advantage, and who never expoſes himſelf but when he is certain of victory. But we can perceive nothing like this in the conduct of the commander of our ſquadron. His diſcipline was relaxed, he allowed ſailors to go on ſhore every day, in the moment of danger, when he had every

reaſon

ſeaſon to expect a viſit from the enemy: he refuſed, as it were, his protection to the tranſports and merchantmen. Fraught with a criminal ſecurity, inſtead of ſending to reconnoitre the enemy, he cloſed his eyes upon the information given him of his impending danger, and allowed himſelf to be almoſt ſurpriſed. Futile reaſonings, which would not impoſe even on children, are incapable of acquitting him. I am aware that what is called prudence has great weight with the world, that this word frequently impoſes ſilence on men of the ſoundeſt underſtandings, and that cowards and poltroons convert it into a rampart, under cover of which they conceal their ſhame and folly. But there was not the ſmalleſt probability that a fleet defeated and diſmayed could have ſtood a moment againſt us, and the neglecting the tranſports and merchantmen, contrary to every regulation in the navy, cannot aſſuredly be deemed a prudent action.

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We all have our moments of weakneſs, and I ſhall not therefore puſh my arguments further. Reaſon is ſo ſlow in her progreſs, and the paſſions ſo rapid in theirs, that we ought not to be aſtoniſhed if the latter ſometimes ſurpriſe us, and we find ourſelves irretrievably loſt, even before we had the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of it. But when we reflect after the clouds are diſſipated, it is then that we ſee the abyſs in which we are plunged, and we become a prey to ſhame and mortification. The commodore now ſees clearly into his paſt conduct, and is affected by a very lively concern. Society and ſolitude are equally burthenſome to him; and, incapable of bearing up againſt his inward reproaches, he has had recourſe to the ungenerous expedient of putting under an arreſt Captain Sutton of the Iſis. As the character of this officer, in his military capacity, had unfortunately been impeached before, Johnſtone deemed him a victim fitteſt for his

his purpoſes, and that he could not any other way juſtify his own conduct.

I am ignorant whether any juſt reaſon exiſted before to ſuſpect the bravery of Captain Sutton; but all are agreed that he ſignalized himſelf in this laſt engagement; that it was owing in a great meaſure to him that the French admiral was driven out of action, and but for this fortunate circumſtance, we ſhould have found much greater difficulty in defeating our enemies. And to evince how much he merited theſe praiſes, it will be ſufficient to obſerve, that the crew of the Iſis refuſed for a long time to obey the officer who came on board to take upon himſelf the command, after Captain Sutton was put under an arreſt.

At the breaking out of the late rupture with Holland, Captain Sutton, in the Iſis, fell in with a Dutch ſhip of ſomewhat inferior force, and did not

ſucceed

ſucceed in capturing her. His crew at this time conſiſted of newly impreſſed men, altogether undiſciplined, who were beſides very ſickly: to theſe cauſes his failure, on that occaſion, is to be aſcribed, Adieu.

LETTER III.

At Sea, the 5th of Auguſt, 1781.

I AM apprehenſive that the reflections I ventured to make in my laſt, and what I have ſtill left to ſay on the ſame ſubject, will impreſs an unpleaſant idea, and lead you to think that I have contracted, during my voyage, a ſtrong propenſity to ſcandal. 'A good heart,' you will ſay, 'inclines us to think well of others, and nothing ſo painful as the expoſing our neighbour's defects.' But I pray you to conſider the duty of an hiſtorian. Would he not be cenſurable, if, ſwayed by fear or an ill-timed lenity, he ſhould ſuppreſs, or even diſguiſe, eſſential facts, and miſlead his reader by repreſenting matters to him different from

what they really are? And would he not, in this caſe, juſtly draw upon himſelf the cenſure and indignation of every honeſt man? The firſt duty, therefore, of an hiſtorian, is to adhere ſtrictly to the truth. I made you a promiſe to this effect, and my word is ſacred; it is dearer to me than honour, life, and reputation.

This reſpect for truth has been my only motive for the above repreſentation of the conduct of Commodore Johnſtone. I could have no poſſible wiſh to ſully his reputation in the eyes of his countrymen, our employments are incompatible; he ſerves in the navy, I in the army: he holds a poſt of diſtinction, I am ſimply a ſubaltern.

But to return to the narrative. A few days before we reached the Cape, we detached a tranſport to look out a-head, who brought into the fleet a Dutch merchantman, by whom we were informed that Suffrein had got the ſtart of us, and

was

was anchored in Falſe Bay. This intelligence ſurpriſed us the more, becauſe it was now mid-winter, a ſeaſon when the hurricanes which prevail in theſe latitudes render the navigation extremely hazardous. But the French admiral, ſolely engroſſed by the intereſts of his nation, had braved every danger, and his temerity was crowned with merited ſucceſs. The winds favoured him; and not one of thoſe furious tiffoons, enormous guſts of wind peculiar to the Indian ſeas, which ſeem calculated for no other purpoſe than the deſtruction of the human ſpecies, diſturbed him in his progreſs; his fleet diſmaſted, and, with ſcarcely any rigging ſtanding, glided tranquilly along on the ſmooth ſea.

I have already ſaid that, on the day when we diſcomfited the French fleet, we remained at anchor till the evening without making any exertion;—that it was duſk when we received orders to chaſe; and that, on our coming up with

the enemy, it was in our power to deſtroy them, at leaſt we ſhould have incurred no riſk in the attempt. I ſhall now add that, if we had even failed in the attempt, the French, who had already ſuffered ſo ſeverely, would have been under the neceſſity of refitting either on the coaſt of Africa, or in ſome diſtant harbour, which would have put us in abſolute poſſeſſion of the Cape. Weak reaſonings have been abundantly employed to exculpate Commodore Johnſtone. It has been urged that, if he had purſued the flying enemy, he would have been unable to rejoin the tranſports he left at St. Jago, becauſe the trade winds which blew from the north-eaſt were diametrically oppoſite to thoſe which would have brought him back to that place. But nothing would have prevented theſe tranſports coming out to join him. By this ſtep he would have poſſeſſed himſelf of the moſt precious eſtabliſhment in the univerſe; and Suffrein, driven to

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ſome diſtant ſpot, would have been no longer an impediment in his way.

This is not one of thoſe chimeras which only exiſt in the imagination: it is the opinion of ſeveral officers who know perfectly what can be done at ſea, and whoſe indignation was rouſed at remaining idle during two or three weeks after the engagement. Thus did the courage and vigilance of Suffrein, but ſtill more our indeciſion, ſecure to the Dutch the poſſeſſion of the Cape, and diſſipate all thoſe projects of ambition, glory, and intereſt, which we ſoldiers are too apt to encourage. Of all the opportunities which fortune threw in our way, one only was left, which our commander was too prudent to try: it was to follow his example, and attack Suffrein in port.

Our ſailing, however, was not unproductive of good effects. We procured information that in Saldina bay, twenty leagues from the Cape, there

were five Dutch Indiamen about to ſail for Europe. The commodore did not neglect this intelligence, and convinced us here that he could be diligent when he thought it would anſwer his purpoſe. He ſailed with his ſquadron without fear, and, early in the morning of the 21ſt of July, we came ſuddenly upon our aſtoniſhed enemies. This was done with ſuch circumſpection, that we were in poſſeſſion of almoſt all their ſhips, before they ſuſpected danger. But no ſooner did they diſcover our hoſtile intention, than they ſet fire to their veſſels, and eſcaped themſelves with whatever effects they could ſcrape together: it is ſaid they carried away to the amount of four hundred thouſand pounds ſterling in diamonds, and other precious ſtones, &c. &c.

Four of the ſhips were preſerved from the general conflagration, but we could not ſucceed in ſaving the fifth. There was every reaſon to fear that the flames from

from her would communicate to the others, and we durſt not approach her on account of the powder ſhe had on board. Our commodore, ſenſibly touched at the proſpect of ſo great a treaſure eſcaping, was for this time deaf to the voice of prudence, and daringly braved death to ſnatch from the ſea the immenſe riches ready to be ſwallowed up. He flew like lightning, and ruſhed into the midſt of the flames; he towed off the veſſel with his own hands, encouraged the ſailors, and made aſtoniſhing exertions. His temerity had a happy effect; the veſſel did not blow up till ſhe was too far diſtant to involve the others in her diſaſter.

After this capture we were three days in regulating our affairs. There is, however, no perfect happineſs in this world: our joy was ſomewhat damped by the news that Hyder Ally had made an irruption into our poſſeſſions, and rendered himſelf maſter of almoſt the whole of

the Carnatic; that our troops were greatly haraſſed, and the inhabitants in general had ſubmitted to the conqueror: that this country, formerly ſo fertile in corn and all kinds of proviſions, was ſcarce of every thing; that agriculture was neglected, and moſt of the lands fallow; that the cities were laid waſte; that horror and deſolation univerſally prevailed; and, finally, that the ſettlement was conſtrained to have recourſe to Bengal for a ſupply of proviſions.

The high opinion formed of our commander, and the idea entertained of his merit in the Houſe of Commons, which had been ſome time on the wane, had now reſumed their former ſplendour. Johnſtone was no longer a man of ordinary talents; every one aſcribed the affair at St. Jago to a moment of inadvertence; and we were all perſuaded that, rouſed from his torpor, and inſtructed by his paſt conduct, he would wipe away the ſtain he had incurred by the entire

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ruin of his enemies. We already fancied we ſaw Suffrein, humbled and diſmayed, imploring our mercy. But the proceedings of a council of war ſoon diſſipated theſe flattering ideas. Whether through fear or jealouſy, it rarely happens that aſſemblies of this kind are ſucceeded by any very hazardous enterpriſe. Few people have ſufficient courage to devote themſelves to a death by which they will acquire no other honour than that of having contributed to the glory of one whom they diſlike. A man placed at the head of affairs has a thouſand motives to ambition to which his inferiors in command are ſtrangers. The wiſh to eclipſe his rivals, of whoſe fame he is jealous; the deſire to attract the applauſes of the multitude, to be conſidered as the ſaviour of his country, and to be diſtinguiſhed by the favours of his ſovereign, are the incentives which ſtimulate him inceſſantly to glory. Hence it happens that, in war, monarchical go-

vernments have generally great advantages over republics.

The reſult of this council of war has never been fully known: it is ſaid, however, to have been honourable to the members by whom it was compoſed.

On the 24th the fleet weighed anchor, all on board, in perfect health, fully reſolved to ſignalize themſelves on the firſt occaſion, and thinking the moment to be near at hand when the French were to be furniſhed with a new ſpecimen of Engliſh proweſs. Every thing contributed to ſuch a proſpect; the deciſion of the council of war as far as it was known; the impatience of the troops at finding themſelves ſo long detained at ſea; and the ſcarcity of proviſions, which began to be ſenſibly felt. But Johnſtone was not to be dictated to, nor was it to him a matter of much concern whether the ſoldiers on board the tranſports were comfortable or not. He meditated projects more ſplendid in their nature, and more worthy his ambition.

bition. Vexed at being conſtantly expoſed to the threats and inſults of Suffrein, he, two days after our departure from Saldina bay, informed the general, commanding the troops, of his reſolution to return home, and in leſs than two hours he put his determination into effect. With his uſual prudence, however, he would not expoſe himſelf on the wide ſeas betwixt us and Europe, and the Jupiter, of fifty guns, received orders to grant him a convoy.

At Liſbon a beautiful and accompliſhed young lady had poſſeſſed herſelf entirely of his affections, and his impatience to eſpouſe her, many have aſſerted, was his motive for deſerting us in ſo perilous and trying a moment.

Figure to yourſelf our ſituation at this juncture. Reduced to two ſhips of the line and two fifties, and cloſe to an active and enterpriſing enemy, it was only neceſſary that Suffrein ſhould be informed of the ſtate of our fleet to give him

him the perfect command of the Indian ſeas; and our defeat would have been followed by the loſs of our richeſt poſſeſſions on the coaſt of Coromandel. Nothing was eaſier than to cut off our ſupplies of proviſions in the Carnatic, and to oblige the troops to capitulate. Thoſe immenſe dominions, which we had acquired with ſo much blood, would have been no longer ours; the ſource of our trade to India would have been annihilated; and England, deprived of her uſual reſources, would have been obliged to diſmiſs her fleets and armies, and to capitulate on any terms with her enemies. Theſe reflections are prompted neither by pique nor chagrin: it muſt be acknowledged on all ſides that, weakened as we were, we could not have prevented Suffrein from making us his prey. Admiral Hughes's fleet was already inferior to that which the French oppoſed to him in theſe ſeas, and found the utmoſt difficulty in keeping his ground.

ground. What would have been the conſequence, if Suffrein had by this capture increaſed his ſquadron to eight ſail of the line? The Engliſh admiral either muſt have yielded, or, what would have been the ſame thing in effect, have kept his fleet conſtantly in harbour: conſider theſe things, and tell me if I have at all exaggerated. Thus does it often happen in war, that a ſingle miſcarriage is attended by a train of ill conſequences.

Here I cannot forbear entering into a few momentary reflections on myſelf, and ſurveying what I apprehended would be my lot. I repreſented Suffrein on the point of falling upon us, and either ſinking our ſhips, or conveying us captives, into a loathſome priſon. What would then have become of all thoſe ſchemes of ambition, which, in the ſimplicity of my heart, I entruſted to you? I thought to ſignalize myſelf by a conduct which would merit the approbation of all around me. I hoped to acquire an honeſt for-

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tune, to reap a few laurels, and to ſpend the remainder of my life in eaſe and tranquillity. What a ſad mortification would it have been to have had all theſe agreeable proſpects cut off by the miſconduct of one man?

I could deſcribe to you the general conſternation which prevailed when we were thus deſerted by our naval commander. I could repeat the ſevere animadverſions we made on the miniſter, and the diſadvantageous compariſon we drew betwixt him and the great man who rendered us ſo flouriſhing during the late war. He who preſides at the national helm ſhould direct his endeavours to the common good, without regard to motives of a private nature, or attending to the idle clamours which the envious and turbulent are conſtantly raiſing. He ſhould puniſh the daſtardly, reward the brave, ſtudy the character of each individual, and promote thoſe only who are truly meritorious. By this conduct

the celebrated Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, reſcued England from a ſtate of torpor in which ſhe was plunged at the beginning of his adminiſtration, and rendered her dreaded and reſpected by every foreign power. He did not ſuffer himſelf to be drawn aſide from his duty by deception, by yielding to ſolicitations or cabals, or by beſtowing offices on the moſt diſtinguiſhed partizans of oppoſition.

LETTER IV.

IF Johnſtone had poſſeſſed ſufficient fortitude to have carried into execution the deciſions of the council of war, I ſhould have examined the Cape attentively, and could have entered into the exacteſt details, by communicating to you my own obſervations on every thing which would have attracted my notice. But I am obliged to rely on the teſtimony of another; and fortunately we have an officer on board, who has made this voyage by order of the Royal Society.

The temperature of the Cape of Good Hope is ſubject to many variations. In the ſummer the ſun is almoſt vertical; during the winter it is in the fifty-third

or

or fifty-fourth degree. Thus an almoſt inſupportable heat is ſucceeded by a very ſevere cold: and to this cauſe we ought generally to aſcribe thoſe tempeſts and hurricanes which occaſion ſuch devaſtation on the land, and are ſo deſtructive to thoſe who happen to be at ſea. The climate, however, is not that which troubles the inhabitants the moſt; a cruel deſpotiſm poiſons every bleſſing, and plunges the inhabitants into a ſtate of the moſt torpid inaction. The air is ſalubrious, and European fruits and vegetables grow here to perfection; but the farmer dares not give to his land that degree of tillage which is neceſſary to reap abundant crops. The governor of the Cape is not leſs abſolute than the governor of St. Jago: he levies exorbitant taxes, and his oppreſſion is ſanctioned by the laws, ſince he acts under the ſtates of Holland.

At a firſt view we are ſurpriſed at ſeeing a republican government, the principles of which tend to equality, thus enſlave

ſlave its colonies. But our aſtoniſhment ceaſes when we reflect that the exigencies of a ſtate demand daily freſh ſupplies in a republic as well as in monarchial ſtates; and that what the Dutch levy on their colonies is, as it were, ſo much gained over and above their uſual ſupplies. The inhabitants of the Cape are ſo haraſſed by theſe exactions, that they only waited for our arrival in order to declare in our favour.

This country of all others is the moſt remarkable for its animals: the elephant, ſo diſtinguiſhed for ſize and inſtinct, is indigenous here. The rhinoceros, famous for a horn of two or three feet in length, which projects from its noſe, and remarkable for its ſtupidity and the impenetrability of its ſkin, is an inhabitant of the vaſt foreſts of the Cape. In theſe immenſe retreats was firſt diſcovered the ourang-outang, an animal which in almoſt every reſpect reſembles the human ſpecies. It walks erect; and

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its arms, legs, hands, and feet, are formed like ours. It has a low forehead, with eyes placed near to each other. We are told by anatomiſts that, in the internal mechaniſm and diſpoſition of its body, it agrees with man. It has neither the miſchievouſneſs nor brutality of other monkies, his manners are very mild, and he does harm to nobody.

In the woods this creature warms itſelf with the Hottentots, but has not the ſenſe to keep up the fire when they are gone. In the ſeaſon when there are no longer any fruits, it goes to the ſea-ſide to collect crabs, and introduces ſmall ſtones into the ſhell-fiſh, to prevent their cloſing, in order to eat them at leiſure.

Theſe faint marks of reaſon in the ourang-outang, but more eſpecially the form of its body, have given the Indians an idea of its being a real man; they verily think he has a language, but out of pure maliciouſneſs, and becauſe he does not chuſe to be obliged to work, he will not ſpeak. Hence the name of ourang-out-

ang, which implies the man of the woods. Notwithſtanding all this it is in reality a beaſt whoſe inſtinct is only confined to its own preſervation and the propagation of its ſpecies; ſince, whatever the moſt prejudiced may ſay, we cannot diſcover in it the ſmalleſt ſpark of that divine fire infuſed into the human ſpecies and which exalts them ſo much above other animals. And this ſerves to prove that matter alone cannot lead to extenſive mental acquirements; and that reaſon does not, as ſome maintain, depend upon a particular organization and mechaniſm.

The zebra, of all the animals found at the Cape, is the beſt ſhaped, and the moſt elegantly adorned by nature. It has the beauty of the horſe, and the fleetneſs of the deer. Its coat is in alternate ſtripes, ſo regularly diſpoſed, that the rule and compaſs, one would imagine, had been employed in forming them. In the females theſe ſtripes are black and white, in the males black and yellow. The ſize of this animal is uſually betwixt

that

that of the horſe and aſs: it has never been completely tamed; is as obſtinate as a mule, and as reſtiff as a vicious horſe. In all probability if the zebra were rendered domeſtic when very young, it would become tractable, and might be found a very ſerviceable animal.

The hippopotamus, or river horſe, called in the ſcriptures behemoth, is ſtill to be found in the rivers of the Cape of Good Hope. The ſtrength of this creature is prodigious: it has been known to raiſe on its back a boat containing ſeveral men. From the ſnout to the tail it meaſures ſixteen or ſeventeen feet; is fourteen or fifteen feet in circumference; its legs are a yard in length, and two feet and a half round; its head is a yard long, and eight feet in compaſs; its teeth, which are preferred by dentiſts to ivory, are ſo hard that they produce ſparks by colliſion with ſteel; its ſkin, when dried, is ſo tough that a muſket ball will not paſs through it. The hippopotamus feeds

upon herbs, roots, rice, ſugar-canes, and fiſhes. It is ſo unwieldy that it cannot overtake any animals on whom it wiſhes to prey.

The difficulty with which it moves renders it extremely timid. It rarely occurs that it forſakes the rivers where it fixes its uſual abode. It ſwims with great facility, continues a long time under water, and can walk upon the bottom as well as on dry land. The female is ſaid to be uniparous, or to bring forth a ſingle young one at a time. The form of the hippopotamus is entirely different from that of a horſe: the kind of neighing it makes has probably given occaſion to the name beſtowed upon it.

The above are the moſt ſingular animals of the Cape which have come to my knowledge. The Dutch found it peopled by a race of men who are no leſs deſerving our attention. The Hottentots, the indigenous inhabitants of this country, are much ſmaller than the Europeans.

They

They offer as a ſacrifice to the Divinity the half of what conſtitutes their manhood. The age of eight years is the uſual time for this cruel ſacrifice. The victim being bound, and ſtretched on his back, the prieſt makes an inciſion, and removes the left teſticle, introducing in its ſtead a lump of mutton ſuet blended with certain medicinal herbs. The wound is then tied up with a bird's tendon, the body anointed with the ſame ſuet, and the operation concludes by the prieſt making water on the unfortunate demicaſtrata, and applying a ſecond layer of greaſe, which he does with ſuch violence, that he leaves his patient in a ſtate of inſenſibility.

Every ſpectator now retires. The ſufferer, unbound, and thus deſerted, drags his enfeebled carcaſe as well as he can, to an adjacent hut built on purpoſe. He continues there without ſuſtenance, and in general is ready to depart at the end of two days, perfectly recovered;

and, that the ſpectators aſſembled at this time may be convinced of it, they tell us he ſets a running as ſwift as a ſtag.

The women, it has been reported, have a kind of flap or excreſcence, which reaches from the *os pubis* to the middle of the thighs, in form of a napkin; but this I am induced to believe is a fiction, ſince I have converſed with ſeveral who have ſeen theſe female Hottentots, and who have aſſured me that they could diſcover nothing of this kind in particular about them.

The Hottentots have thick lips, buſhy eye-brows, a large head, a ſpare body, and ſlender limbs. They anoint their hair with greaſe and ſuet; and as they never waſh off theſe ſubſtances much duſt and filth are collected, ſo that the hairs are all clotted together, and reſemble a ſheep's fleece dragged through the kennel. Theſe filthy and diſguſtful people feed upon putrid fleſh which ſhortens their days to ſuch a degree, that

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they rarely exceed their fortieth year. The Hottentots are not naturally black; but render themſelves ſo by art. It is ſaid that the Dutch reared one of their young women, who became perfectly white. The mothers flatten the noſes of their children; a prominent noſe with them is a great deformity.

Theſe ſavages are ſo extremely fond of liberty, that they are averſe to undertake any kind of labour, either for themſelves or others. Perſuaded that nature has eſtabliſhed no diſtinction betwixt men, they think that no one has a right to command them. They look down with ſcorn and contempt on thoſe who ſubmit to the will of another, or who embrace the degrading ſtate of mercenaries. The Dutch could never prevail upon them to unite in their ſociety. Their children have been ſent to Europe, in order to try whether, after having given them a reliſh for European cuſtoms and manners, they

could prevail on the parents to quit their huts, and live in more commodious habitations. But ſcarcely were theſe children returned, when, impelled by a kind of inſtinct, they threw off their garments of the loom, and, deſpiſing the pomp and luxury of cities, returned with gladneſs to their old companions, and, like them, clothed themſelves once more in ſheep-ſkins.

Theſe people have a particular attachment to mutton ſuet. They anoint the body with it, and convert it into a kind of covering for the head. In order to procure this article ſo eſſential to their happineſs, they have conſtantly and diligently applied themſelves to the rearing of ſheep, which is the only employment they do not diſdain. They appear to be in every reſpect well qualified for good ſhepherds:—being weak and indolent, they are well calculated to watch over animals whoſe tractable nature requires neither ſtrength nor activity in

thoſe who have the care of them, and who only require good paſturage and ſhelter from the ſun's rays. Theſe *homunculi*, when following a timid flock, appear more in character than thoſe monſtrous giants, thoſe terrible cyclops, who, after having forged thunder in the caves of Lemnos, were reduced to the neceſſity of tending ſheep on the Sicilian mountains.

The Cape ſheep are very remarkable. They are much ſmaller than ours in Europe, and the tail is altogether diſproportionate to the body. In ſome it weighs twenty pounds, and conſiſts entirely of a maſs of ſuet. The ſheep in Europe have a flake of fat on the back; theſe have none. Naturaliſts apprehend, and with ſeeming truth, that the fat which uſually in this animal, covers the loins, has, in theſe ſheep, fallen into the tail; and this they aſcribe to the effect of climate, &c.

What I have before obſerved of the young

young Hottentots, who feel ſo great a ſatiſfaction in returning to their parents, and the inſtances of a few Europeans who have left their native country in order to live amongſt the inhabitants of Canada, have led a celebrated writer, the Abbé Raynal, to conclude that woods, rocks, and caves, have a natural charm not to be found in a civiliſed country, and that ſociety far from improving human nature, binds and conſtrains it. Agreeably to this doctrine, a rude deſert filled with the howlings of wild beaſts, the croakings of the raven, the melancholy ſcreeches of the owl;—uncultivated plains, covered with brambles and thorns;—hunger, nakedneſs, the dread of ferocious animals, and the being expoſed to the bite of venomous reptiles;— are capable of producing in man more agreeable ſenſations than a ſociety in which laws are a protection againſt violence, in which the weak are not oppreſſed by the ſtrong, or deprived of the fruits of their labour;

bour; that a ſolitude of this kind is more endearing than a life where honeſt induſtry ſupplies ſure reſources, and places us in a ſtate to obtain the aſſiſtance of others when we are no longer capable of providing for our own neceſſities; — where commerce produces riches, which, being divided in certain proportions amongſt all, each feels the benefit of the public proſperity; — where, whilſt ſome draw from the land the aliments neceſſary to life, or expoſe themſelves in the defence of the community, others cultivate their intellectual faculties, extend the limits of the human underſtanding, and immortalize themſelves by works which excite the admiration of poſterity.

'Becauſe a few half-ſavage men ſtill covered with their primitive rudeneſs; becauſe a few Europeans, who had neither hearth nor habitation, without any ſpirit of induſtry, or at leaſt being too lazy to work, have baniſhed themſelves to the woods in order to avoid abodes where

where politeneſs and public eaſe were inceſſantly reproaching their idleneſs, miſery, and groſſneſs: are we to conlude that man is formed to live wild, and that ſociety is a ſtate of violence, contrary to his nature?

But are we not formed to revolt againſt Nature, to oppoſe her laws, and to counteract her deſigns? Nobody dares affirm it. It muſt therefore, according to the Abbé Raynal's doctrine, ſometime happen that ſhe will break aſunder her fetters, and regain her ancient freedom. Then, like an impetuous torrent which bears every thing before it, ſhe will ſhed her influence on all ſides, will overthrow our temples, our houſes, our public edifices, and all thoſe monuments in which taſte and delicacy are equally diſplayed. The arts and ſciences, the offspring of ſociety, will then be for ever annihilated. The Licurguſes and Solons, all the legiſlators, ancient and modern, if any remembrance of them ſhould ſtill remain, will

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be conſidered as unnatural tyrants, who had kept us for many centuries in a ſtate of rebellion againſt our common mother. Poets, orators, and philoſophers, will be held in deriſion; and what we now call taſte, diſcernment, delicacy, and elegance, will be viewed as the reveries of a delirious mind. Virtue, juſtice, honour, and probity, will not be even known. Brambles, thiſtles, ſteril and poiſonous herbs, will ſpring up in our gardens inſtead of the roſe and honeyſuckle; our meadows will become moraſſes; our fertile vallies overflowed by the rivers, will infect the air with noxious exhalations, and, fatal to all other animals, will become the reſort of frogs and filthy reptiles; the lion and tyger will eſtabliſh their ſway where the goat and lamb now brouze the flowery herb; the ſea, which we have ſubdued, will ceaſe to acknowledge our ſuperiority; the bonds which unite us, and which become the general intereſt, being broken, there will

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be no longer any communication betwixt man and man; and each individual, inſtead of finding in his neighbour a prop and ſecurity, will view him as an enemy, bent on his deſtruction. Where ſhall we then find the honour, the probity, the morality, and the virtue, which have been the glory and pride of men who have cultivated theſe virtues, ſince we ſee clearly that they cannot exiſt without ſociety?

I ſhould like as well to hear it advanced that the love of life is merely a chimera; that the time will come when men will univerſally plunge a poignard into each other's boſom, or will throw themſelves headlong from a precipice; and that in this way the human race will be annihilated becauſe there have been from the earlieſt times very ſenſible people who could not be prevented from putting ſome ſuch tragical end to their exiſtence, and whoſe number, unfortunately, is pretty conſiderable. Raynal muſt depend very much on the credulity of his readers to hazard

abſurdities

abſurdities like theſe. But was he perſuaded of what he has advanced? I ſhall be inclined to think ſo, when I ſee him forſaking cities and a peopled country, embracing the dreary ſolitude of the woods, and taſting that happineſs there, which, according to him, is ſo conformable to human nature.

I ſhould not have been at the pains to refute this paradox, if I had not found in the army and elſwhere men, who, on this ſubject, coincided in ſentiment with M. Raynal. They muſt undoubtedly have forgotten that the uſe of ſpeech which enables us to communicate reciprocally our thoughts; that our weakneſs, our wants, and reaſon which exalts us to ſuch a degree and inſtructs us to direct to one common end all our intellectual and corporeal faculties; that the comparative degree of perfection we find in ourſelves alone; are all irrefragable proofs that we were deſtined for ſociety. They ſurely would rather inſiſt that Nature, which has

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created nothing in vain, has beſtowed on us a thouſand uſeleſs faculties and energies, and has denied to us many others which would have been better ſuited to our faculties.

If it were intended that we ſhould paſs our time in foreſts, and in the hollows of rocks, and feed upon raw fleſh like animals of prey, why has Nature denied to us the fur of the bear, the claws and agility of the lion?

It was not without motives of the ſoundeſt policy that government projected the conqueſt of the Cape. There is not in theſe ſeas any place of ſo much importance, whether we conſider its ſituation or its productions. All the outward and homeward bound Indiamen paſs near it. Our fleets of men of war would at all ſeaſons have there obtained proviſions and refreſhments. We ſhould have derived another advantage, that of ſaving immenſe ſums which fall every year into the hands of France and Portugal.

tugal. The ſoil of the country is perfectly well calculated for the culture of grapes, inſomuch that at this time an excellent wine is made, called conſtantia, of rich flavour, and which does not yield to the beſt wines of Europe. A greater quantity might eaſily be made than would be ſufficient to ſupply our Eaſt India eſtabliſhments.

I have already mentioned our having been informed by a Dutch ſhip, that the French fleet had got the ſtart of us, by anchoring in Falſe Bay. It was the opinion of many that we ought to have put on foot an actual inquiry on this ſubject, and it is now generally thought that our information was deſtitute of truth. Here, you ſee, are many ſubjects of complaint againſt Johnſtone: mal-adminiſtration; over ſight; indolence, not to ſay credulity; and the leaving his fleet when in a perilous ſituation. What now affects me more than any other conſideration, is the diſtreſs which

ſhort allowance of proviſions is beginning to make in the fleet: of this I ſhall inform you particularly in my next, unleſs death in the mean time ſhould cut ſhort the thread of my narration. I am, however, as well as any man can be under ſuch circumſtances.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Johanna, the 22d of September, 1781.

WE left Saldanha bay with proviſions for the time uſually employed in the paſſage from thence, which is a month; but, as our voyage laſted eight weeks, we ſoon diſcovered the neceſſity of putting all our people on ſhort allowance. Water was the firſt article that failed; and our conſumption of it was confined to only one pint per diem; but this having been diſtilled from ſea water, was ſo flat to the taſte as to make a moſt diſagreeable potation. Fever and ſcurvy, the uſual conſequences of inſufficient nouriſhment, ſoon made their appearance on board every ſhip in the fleet. Thoſe only, who have ſuffered like us, can form an ade-

quate idea of our diſtreſs: the livelieſt imagination cannot do juſtice to the horror of thoſe who were eye-witneſſes to the ravages of theſe cruel diſeaſes. Figure to yourſelf, on the one hand, a number of the ſcorbutics immoveable on their mattraſſes, covered with loathſome ulcers, and in a ſtate of body ſo highly putrid that they were of the blackneſs of a negroe; on the other, (a ſpectacle no leſs ſhocking) men in the delirium of a burning fever, acting ſuch extravagancies as ſhewed to how low a pitch the nobleſt powers of human nature were degraded. Conceive, if you can, the frantic cries, the wild deſires, of theſe miſerable men, who loudly implored us to relieve them from that miſery which we could not even alleviate; and who were periſhing in our ſight for want of a little freſh proviſions to recruit their exhauſted ſtrength, and cool the blood that was boiling in their veins. Many of the ſhips buried four or five hands every day: and on

board the only line of battle ſhip in the ſquadron the number of dead and dying was ſo great that there did not remain ſufficient hands to do the ordinary duty. In this diſtreſsful ſituation we were becalmed: and now thoſe who had hitherto ſhewn the greateſt calmneſs and reſolution, ſeemed to loſe their ſpirits on the approach of what they thought immediate and inevitable deſtruction.

However, a fair breeze unexpectedly ſpringing up, relieved us from the horror of deſpair, and ſoon brought us in ſight of the long-wiſhed for harbour. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the change this happy circumſtance operated on our minds. We were pale, emaciated, and weak, and probably in three or four days ſhould have fallen victims to want and diſeaſe, if the calm had continued; but no ſooner had we the joyful proſpect of ſetting our feet once more on terra firma, than we felt ourſelves animated with new life and ſpirits. At the bare mention of land you

might have ſeen numbers in the laſt ſtage of the ſcurvy caſt their languid eyes towards the ſhore, and then cloſe them in death for ever. Imagine our joy when we perceived ourſelves drawing near the harbour! With what eager eyes we ſurveyed the neceſſaries of life! We ſeemed already to have regained our wonted health and vigour. After we had diſembarked, we ſpent whole days in contemplating the land; and the ſick, who had long been confined to their beds, crawled out of the huts that had been prepared for them, to admire the fall of a torrent, or ſome ſuch ordinary object, as if it had been one of the ſeven wonders of the world.

We were almoſt tempted to queſtion the juſtice of Providence when we obſerved the abundance of all the neceſſaries and comforts of life, which poured upon the groſs and ſtupid Mahometans of this place, while we, who were civilized men and Chriſtians, had not enjoyed the bleſſ-

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ing of a ſingle ſhower of rain during the whole paſſage from St. Jago.

The ſecond inſtant was the happy day of our arrival at Johanna. The inhabitants crowded as ſoon as poſſible on board the ſhips with fruits, vegetables, and all the neceſſaries they thought we might want. The deſire of gain is ſo ſtrong in theſe people that it overpowers all other conſiderations; and, from the pauper to the governor, there is not one of them who is not ready, for a ſmall recompenſe, to ſerve you on the moſt paltry occaſions. It muſt however be obſerved in their praiſe, that they executed our commiſſions with fidelity, and with the moſt exact punctuality. The articles of proviſion which this iſland furniſhes, are oxen, goats, poultry, yams, and ſweet potatoes; all of them at a moderate price, fixed by the king. A few ſhips might eaſily be ſupplied at this place; but the numbers of our people were ſuch, that we had ſoon entirely drained of proviſions.

The proſpect of Johanna, when viewed from any diſtance at ſea, is highly pictureſque; the face of the country being broken by lofty mountains, which hide their heads in the clouds, and are at all times clothed with the livelieſt verdure. On a cloſer ſurvey this iſland diſplays beauties worthy of the muſe of Virgil or the pencil of Titian. Valleys rich and highly cultivated; groves of fruit trees, watered by refreſhing ſtreams, which gently murmur in their courſe between banks enamelled with flowers, every where preſent themſelves to the delighted eye of the ſea-worn ſtranger; while numerous flocks, bounding on the hills, and herds of the heavier cattle, devoted to the labours of the plough, or the ſupply of the dairy, at once evince the active induſtry and eaſy circumſtances of the happy inhabitants.

The people, attentive to a wiſe union of the uſeful with the agreeable, plant whole foreſts of cocoa and banana trees.

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The cocoa, as you already know, is the moſt uſeful tree in nature: the nut affords, at the ſame time, a delicious food and moſt refreſhing drink: the Indians extract an oil from it, with which they anoint their bodies, and which ſerves them likewiſe to burn for light. The bark is fibrous, like flax, and is manufactured into a variety of articles, ſuch as ſails, cordage, clothing for the lower claſſes of the people, and furniture for the houſes of the great. The banana, with which, perhaps, you are leſs acquainted, grows to the height of ten or twelve feet, and by the breadth and cloſeneſs of its foliage affords an agreeable ſhade againſt the ſcorching beams of the ſun: its fruit is arranged on the tree like bean-pods on their ſtalk, and reſembles them in ſhape: it contains a pulp of a yellow colour ſo highly nutritious, that five or ſix bananas are found ſufficient to ſuſtain a man for a whole day. This fruit is, however, only an article of luxury

ury at Johanna, and does not come to ſuch perfection as in the Weſt Indies, where it conſtitutes the ordinary food of the ſlaves.

The form of government here is much the ſame as at St. Jago; but it does not appear that the ſovereign has ever been guilty of any abuſe of power. There is only one tax levied on the country, which is always of the ſame amount, except in years of ſcarcity; when it is either leſſened, or entirely given up, as the exigencies of the people may require. In fact, every circumſtance in the conduct of this prince juſtly entitles him to be called the father and not the tyrant of his country. A king of ſuch a diſpoſition would almoſt reconcile one to an arbitrary government; for what greater public happineſs is there than living under a monarch, all whoſe cares are centered in the eaſe and happineſs of his ſubjects, who under his wiſe and moderate adminiſtration enjoy a tranquillity unknown

known to thoſe tumultuous governments, which are expoſed to the intemperance of popular faction and cabal. Arbitrary governments would be, without doubt, preferable to all others, if the ſovereign, as in this iſland, would make the good of his ſubjects the ſole object of his care. But woeful experience ſhews us that out of ten deſpots there is hardly one who does not abuſe the unlimited power he poſſeſſes, and make his people feel that the yoke of tyranny is an intolerable burthen. It is more flattering to human pride to ſtrike terror into ſlaves, than to excite reſpect in freemen. It requires leſs wiſdom to maintain the public peace by inflicting dreadful puniſhments, than by thoſe gentler means, which muſt be adopted with men who acknowledge no power but that of the laws. In the firſt caſe nothing is wanted but the will of one man; in the ſecond, laws, courts of juſtice, with all their attendant forms, uſages, and cuſtoms, are eſſentially requiſite

quiſite for the operations of civil government; beſide a degree of knowledge which deſpotic princes rarely take the trouble to acquire. A haſty glance at the hiſtory of the Cæſars, and of the Eaſt, will ſufficiently eſtabliſh the truth of this doctrine.

A people, who have ſuch a chief governor as the king of Johanna, eaſily accuſtom themſelves to an arbitrary government; and it is not till an arrogant and oppreſſive ſucceſſor is ſeated on the throne, that they feel the weight of the chains they have made for themſelves, and which they have neither ſtrength nor courage to break. But if they have ſtill ſome notions of their natural rights, they may perhaps be rouſed by their ſufferings, and ſacrifice the tyrant to their juſt reſentment. Having eſcaped the evils of ſlavery, they will, as far as human prudence is capable, ſecure their newly acquired liberty on the firm baſis of a wiſe ſyſtem of laws.

It is not ſurpriſing that we ſhould find under the king of Johanna men of wiſdom, induſtry, and enterpriſe; becauſe every one is ſecure of enjoying the fruits of his labour, and of paying no more to the ſtate than the public ſervice really requires. But they appear to have a powerful ſtimulus to induſtry in their religion, which, though calculated, in its general principles, to keep men for ever in a rude and barbarous ſtate, does, in one inſtance, certainly urge them to the greateſt exertions. Mahomet has permitted his followers to take as many wives as they are able to maintain; and as, of conſequence, the indulgence of their deſires muſt be meaſured by the extent of their fortunes, the activity and eagerneſs they diſplay in the purſuit of wealth is not at all to be wondered at. In fact, who would not toil night and day to poſſeſs all the different beauties that have charmed his eyes, or captivated his heart? It is to this plurality of wives

that

that we muſt have recourſe for the explanation of a circumſtance which, in an arbitrary government, cannot fail to excite ſurpriſe; I mean the induſtry of the courtiers. None of them receives any recompenſe for his perſonal ſervice to the king; and as the beauties of the continent are only to be obtained by money, theſe great men muſt either ſubmit to trade with the Europeans, or be denied thoſe bewitching objects, who are the only ſolace of the evils of human life, and through whom alone we enjoy by anticipation the bliſs of heaven. The greateſt of the gods was not aſhamed to take upon himſelf the ſhape of a bull to enjoy the pleaſures of love; why then ſhould men bluſh to act the part of hirelings to obtain every thing that is charming in this world? What a wonderful man was that ſame Mahomet! And how well would his inſtitutions be obſerved if his religion was eſtabliſhed in our county.

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The ſame arts that were formerly practiſed in the Roman Catholick Church, to keep the people in ignorance, and increaſe their veneration for the prieſthood, are to be ſeen here in full effect. But the inſtruments employed are much more ſimple than the relicks, flagellations, and miracles of the Catholick prieſts; being in fact nothing but a few holy *ducks*. Theſe birds are ſuppoſed to be inſpired with the knowledge of futurity, and the Mufti is the only perſon who has the privilege of conſulting them. When the men of the greateſt wiſdom are at a loſs how to act in the affairs of the ſtate, or are doubtful of the iſſue of ſome important enterprize, the high prieſt, in ſolemn proceſſion at the head of his clergy, proceeds from the moſque to the ponds, where theſe ſacred birds take up their abode, and addreſſes to them his moſt fervent prayers and ſupplications. If the ducks approach their reverend votaries of their own accord, the omen is good; if they

they keep aloof it is doubtful. In the latter caſe the prieſts entice them to draw near, by offering ſuch food as they are fond of, and the Mufti having conſulted them on the buſineſs in hand, ſuch a courſe of conduct is obſerved as they are ſuppoſed to dictate.

The puniſhments inflicted by the laws are calculated to be at the ſame time a correction to the offender and an example to all other men. When a criminal is convicted of theft, he ſuffers the loſs of his hand. This puniſhment appears to me more likely to reſtrain men of evil diſpoſitions than any now uſed in Europe. The death of a malefactor impreſſes the minds of the ſpectators only at the inſtant of the execution, and is ſoon effaced from their remembrance; but a man ſo conſpicuouſly mutilated is a conſtant example and living monument of the vengeance of the laws wherever he goes. It is true that he is rendered uſeleſs and perhaps burthenſome to ſociety,

but

but the terror that he ſtrikes into thoſe, who are inclined to ſimilar acts of immorality, more than compenſates for that inconvenience.

We were in ſuch a dread of Monſ. Suffrein, that we were always under apprehenſions of his falling upon us unawares. A boat that came among the ſhips in the night, threw us all into the greateſt conſternation. Two hours before day the ſignal of a ſurprize was made; and ſhortly after that for the line of battle. Immediately all the boats were ſent aſhore, to collect among the different ſhips companies as many hands as were able to come on board; and, though the greater part of our ſeamen were ſo weak that they were hardly able to ſtand on their feet, they embarked in the higheſt ſpirits, declaring, with an oath, that they were glad to have another bruſh with the Monſieurs before they died.

The ſhips were ſoon cleared for action, and the guns loaded: but the return of day ſhewed us our miſtake. The

The day after our arrival at Johanna we ſent the ſick on ſhore; it was a melancholy ſpectacle to behold many of theſe wretched men, now in too weak a ſtate to be removed, expiring as they were let down into the boats; ſome of them breathed their laſt as ſoon as they reached the ſhore, but the greater number lived to enjoy the land once more. The effect of land air and freſh proviſions on thoſe who ſurvived the fatigue of their removal, almoſt exceeds belief. Many of the ſcorbutic, whoſe bodies were one continued ulcer, and who could not have lived four-and-twenty hours at ſea, were ſet upon their legs in leſs than a week, and are now in perfect health. It is worthy of remark, that out of one thouſand ſick who were ſent on ſhore, only two hundred and three died.

I believe that the fevers, which attacked our men, are generally attributed to the change of climate: but why did not the ſame cauſe produce a ſimilar effect the firſt time we croſſed the line, when

when the weather was hotter, more rainy, and conſequently more unwholeſome? This opinion muſt then be erroneous; I ſhall therefore beg leave to advance ſome conjectures, which, I truſt, will be found nearer the truth. I believe it will be readily granted that a pint of water per diem is inſufficient to dilute a quantity of groſs and heavy food, and to repair the waſte of fluids which paſs off by perſpiration in a hot climate. It will not then be denied that a deficiency in the quantity of the fluids muſt occaſion a thickneſs of the blood, which will render the circulation laborious and imperfect, deranging the nobleſt organs of the animal ſyſtem, and terminating in the violent paroxyſms of a fever. The obvious concluſion from theſe premiſes is, that the fevers in our ſquadron owed their origin to the want of a ſufficient quantity of good freſh water.

Theſe, and other cruel diſeaſes to which the crews of ſhips are ſubject, may fre-

quently, with great juſtice, be laid to the charge of the commanding officers, who, from an ill-judged economy, avoid the opportunities of putting into port, and ſupplying themſelves with freſh water: by theſe means they are often ill provided with that eſſential article, and their ſhip's companies experience a train of evils much greater than any that can ariſe from a meer change of climate. The ſcurvy which was ſo deſtructive in our ſquadron can only be attributed to our want of freſh water. For in climates where the perſpiration is equal to the quantity of liquid taken into the ſtomach, the ſaline particles paſs off by the pores; but if the fluids are not ſufficiently diluted, theſe particles remain in the blood, which they vitiate and corrupt.

LETTER VI.

Calicut, Aug. 20, 178[illegible].

WE ſet ſail the day after the date of my laſt letter all in good health. I could not quit, without regret, that charming iſland, where in ſhady groves and verdant vallies we had loſt even the memory of the hardſhips we had ſuffered on our way. How far were we from thinking, that thoſe agreeable ſpots where we had ſo often enjoyed the refreſhing coolneſs of the breeze and of the ſhade, would prove a new ſource of calamity to us. In the vallies of Johanna, covered with cocoa trees and ſurrounded by lofty mountains, the air cannot circulate with freedom, or clear itſelf of the extraneous vapours that are mixed with it.

Trees, which have fallen through age, are ſuffered to rot; and in conjunction

with the large quantity of fruit produce a mephitic exhalation, which muſt greatly add to the baneful qualities of the ſtagnant air. As we had reſorted every day to theſe dangerous retreats, we ſoon felt the evil conſequences of our imprudence; and a putrid fever, which broke out in the fleet in leſs than a fortnight, carried off great numbers of our men. As the officers had frequented the vallies more than the private men, they ſuffered the diſeaſe with aggravated ſymptoms. Thoſe who had credited the accounts given them of the inſalubrity of the vallies, had in conſequence pitched their tents on the mountains: and experience has ſhewn that in theſe ſituations they breathed a purer air; for they have been exempt from the general ſickneſs that has prevailed.

When we took our departure from Johanna we were in hopes of reaching Bombay in three or four weeks; but we were not ſo fortunate as we had reaſon

to

to expect. The calms, which for ſome time always precede the monſoons, kept us back near three weeks; and the ſouth-eaſt monſoon freſhening upon us, rendered it impoſſible to make Bombay. The ſtock of freſh water was almoſt conſumed and the biſcuit full of large maggots: we had already expended all our freſh proviſions, and we had nothing to eat but deteſtable ſalt meat, as hard as a board. Thoſe among us who had the courage to ſurmount their prejudices, lived entirely upon rats, which they found an excellent and nouriſhing food. By theſe means they preſerved their health, and acquired by their own experience a knowledge, that the prejudices of childhood are in all caſes ridiculous, in many injurious.

Finding we could keep the ſea no longer, it was determined to diſembark on the firſt land we ſhould be able to make on the coaſt of Arabia. On the

27th of September we reached the bay of Morbet, which takes its name from a ſmall village of Arabia Felix. It is difficult to account for the pompous epithet of *happy*, which is given to this part of Arabia, unleſs indeed we ſhould ſuppoſe it to be ironical; for we could obſerve nothing neceſſary for the ſuſtenance of human life for the extent of more than twenty miles of country. The whole coaſt offers no other proſpect to the eye than a diſmal chain of barren and rocky mountains. Proviſions and wood for fuel are brought by ſea from a place twenty miles diſtant. The inhabitants wage continual war with a neighbouring village; and were they once to ſuffer any conſiderable overthrow from their enemies, they would be cut off from the means of procuring proviſions, and be forced to ſubmit to the hard neceſſity of making a choice between ſlavery and death. But ſuch is their confidence in

their

their own courage and military ſkill, that in ſpite of all theſe advantages they appear perfectly calm and tranquil. The criticalneſs of their ſituation ſeems to inſpire them with a degree of energy we have not ſeen ſince our departure from England.

For want of Arabian interpreters we were able to acquire but an imperfect knowledge of their government; however, the little attention they pay to their chief ſufficiently indicates that he does not poſſeſs any great extent of power. The Arabs, in their perſons, are ſlightly but well ſhaped; they have engaging countenances, and generally go about armed. They all carry a matchlock, a lance, a ſword, and a ſort of ſhield or target, which they uſe with great dexterity in warding off blows of every kind.

The inhabitants of the inland parts of the country hearing of our arrival, and of our pacific behaviour, ſent us a few oxen,

oxen, goats, yams, and dates, at a very moderate price, but in too ſmall a quantity to victual the fleet.

Our uſual amuſement was to ſhoot antelopes, which are of the ſize and ſhape of the roe. As ſome of our officers were one day in purſuit of theſe animals, they took into their head to climb the rocky mountains I have already ſpoken of, in order to diſcover whether the country on the other ſide of them had any better title to the name of *happy*. However they ſaw nothing but rocks which bore marks of having once been inhabited. They did not think it prudent to riſk a nearer ſurvey of them, becauſe the people of Morbet had appriſed them that theſe mountains were the reſort of robbers, who ſeldom failed to murder thoſe that fell into their hands.

A few days after our arrival at Morbet, all the ſhips of war ſailed for Bombay to join Sir Edward Hughes, who was much inferior in ſtrength to the French admiral.

admiral. This reinforcement reached him juſt in time to prevent his being totally overthrown; for two or three hours after its arrival the oppoſed fleets came to action, and the moſt bloody engagement followed that, perhaps, was ever recorded in hiſtory. There was no decided advantage on either ſide; but it cannot be doubted, that, if admiral Hughes had not been ſo opportunely reinforced, he muſt have given way, and the Engliſh fleets, the Engliſh trade, and the Engliſh ſettlements, have lain entirely at the mercy of the enemy.

The frequency of ſuch events as theſe, which occur almoſt daily in times of war, ought to convince the moſt obſtinate that there is a Providence, which regulates the fate of empires, and advances, or checks the projects of men in proportion as they agree with its immutable decrees.

I am well convinced that God ſees into the future as into the preſent; and

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at the ſame time I maintain that our will is free. This I believe to be the opinion of all ſenſible men; yet I never heard a ſound argument advanced in ſupport of it. To ſay that God ſees into all futurity, and knows the actions of an individual that will be born a thouſand years hence, is the ſame thing as to aſſert that that individual is impelled by a fixed and poſitive neceſſity to a particular courſe of actions: ſuch a being can neither be virtuous nor vicious; can neither deſerve puniſhment, nor be entitled to reward. The laws of religion, as well as all human regulations for the maintenance of the public peace, muſt in that caſe be equally vain and ridiculous. On the other hand, if you conſider the world as given up to the folly of man, you reduce the Divinity to the condition of a finite being; you deprive him of his omnipotence, and make him even dependent on his own creatures. What an exceſs of folly! Can God be

unjuſt

unjuſt or limited in his powers? The idea is abſurd and blaſphemous. God cannot err; his knowledge is infinite; he foreſees whatever is good in his eyes, and whatever he does foreſee will infallibly happen. But he created man a free agent; he cannot, therefore, without deſtroying his own work, foreſee all the actions of man. For as every action, of which God has the foreknowledge, is decreed by his irreſiſtible will, there can be no ſin in doing it. The revolutions of the earth are regulated to all eternity; ſuch things will always take their courſe independent of man. If Troy is fated to periſh, God might take away the courage of Hector, Sarpedon, and all the other heroes that retarded its fall: but that privation would be unjuſt; he therefore leaves them to act as brave men, and meet with a glorious death in defence of their country. Thus it is that all events are managed by the Divine Wiſdom without infringing on the

the liberty and free agency of man: thus it is that man may be virtuous or wicked; and the juſtice of the Almighty be ſhewn in the diſpenſation of rewards and puniſhments. This doctrine is evidently laid down in the Iliad, and the writings of the ſtoics—in every line one may ſee alluſions to the preſcience of the Divinity, and the free agency of man. I cannot without horror hear wretches, who have brought themſelves to ruin by their idleneſs and profligacy, aſſert that Providence has willed their diſtreſs. Neither am I leſs ſhocked, when pretended free-thinkers turn into ridicule the opinions which are generally received on this ſubject.

LETTER VII.

AFTER taking in water we ſet ſail, uncertain whether the monſoon would allow us to reach Bombay. The firſt day we had alternately calms and light breezes, a ſort of weather generally conſidered as tedious; but we paſſed our time very agreeably in fiſhing for rock-cod, which abounds in theſe ſeas, and is an exquiſite eatable.

The inhabitants of the Arabian coaſt are all pirates or thieves: with them power ſuperſedes right and reaſon, and they think themſelves entitled to whatever they are able to ſeize. The juſtice and moderation of our conduct towards the inhabitants of Morbet ought naturally to have excited in them ſentiments of gratitude. It was in our power to have

deſtroyed them all, and to have laid the village in aſhes in leſs than an hour. When we ſet ſail two of our men were accidentally left behind; we were hardly out of ſight before the Arabs ſet upon them, and immediately ſacrificed one of them to their brutal rage. The other fortunately eſcaped; and, having ſecreted himſelf in the cavern of a rock, ſubſiſted for three days on a few ſhell fiſh he found in the place of his retreat. Luckily one of the ſhips, having ſome occaſion to return, arrived in time to ſave his life. The inhabitants urged, in excuſe for this unparalleled violence and cruelty, that the two men had attempted to force a ſeraglio; but this pretence did not bear the leaſt colour of truth or probability.

We learnt at Bombay that the people of Morbet lay violent hands on all the Chriſtians that fall into their power; and this inveterate hate, which is handed down from generation to generation,

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is founded on the following tradition. An European ſhip is ſaid to have anchored on this coaſt in the greateſt diſtreſs. The crew requeſted a ſupply of proviſions and other neceſſaries, which the inhabitants (having probably none to ſpare) refuſed to give them: the captain of the ſhip, who attributed this refuſal to the diſinclination of the people to ſupply him, and whoſe men were in the utmoſt neceſſity, determined to obtain by force what had been denied to his entreaties. A ſkirmiſh was the conſequence of this reſolution, which proved fatal to the life of the high-prieſt, who was highly revered, and reputed a ſaint in the place. The people of Morbet were ſo much exaſperated at the loſs of this reverend perſonage, that they bound themſelves by an oath to ſacrifice to his manes all the Chriſtians that ſhould fall into their hands.

As I am now on the article of anecdotes, I muſt beg leave to relate another,

other, which regards this country. We were told at Bombay, that there was a time when the territory of Morbet was ſo fruitful, as, not undeſervedly, to be called a part of Arabia the *happy*; but a deluge, which laid the country under water, ſwept away the ſoil, leaving nothing behind but the naked rock. Hiſtory abounds with ſimilar facts. There is great reaſon to believe that the deluge recorded by Moſes did not literally extend over the whole earth. The account of the ſacred hiſtorian muſt be read with ſome allowance for thoſe pompous and figurative expreſſions that are ſtill ſo much in uſe with the Orientals.

Moſes had been brought up among the Egyptians, a people remarkable in all ages for hiſtorical exaggerations, and a love of the marvellous. It is true, that the phænomenon of the flood is declared to have been produced by an expreſs command of Providence. But is it probable that God would deluge the whole

earth, and deſtroy all created beings, for the ſake of puniſhing one race of men? There are animals in America, ſuch as the Sloth, which, if they had continued creeping from the time that the ark firſt reſted on Mount Ararat to this day, could not have reached to that part of the world where they are now found.

The wind for ſome time was ſuch as we had reaſon to expect it: but it chopped about on a ſudden in an unuſal manner, and continued to blow from a fair quarter, till our arrival at the place of our deſtination on the 27th of laſt January.

Hyder Ally was making ſuch rapid progreſs in the Carnatic, that our preſence in that country was judged highly neceſſary; in conſequence we received orders to depart for the coaſt of Coromandel, and weighed anchor on the 28th of the ſame month.

Our ſtay at Bombay was ſo ſhort, that we had not leiſure to make ſuch obſervations on the different religions of the inhabitants as we could have wiſhed. The ſect of the Perſees, in a great meaſure, withſtood the change in matters of religion which was effected by the Mahometans about thirteen hundred years ago. Some of their fundamental principles have, however, ſuffered great alteration from the cuſtoms they have been obliged to adopt for the ſake of ſheltering themſelves from the perſecutions of their enthuſiaſtick conquerors. They ſtill adore fire and the ſun; not as gods, which ſome people have erroneouſly ſuppoſed, but as repreſenting the nobleſt attributes of the Divinity, light and purity. They have yet the cuſtom of expoſing the bodies of their dead to be devoured by birds and beaſts of prey, contrary to the received notions of all other profeſſions of religion. You are, no doubt, acquainted with the great

care

care ſhewn by the Egyptians in preſerving the remains of their deceaſed friends, as well as with the fear which the ancients in general had of ſhip-wreck, leſt their bodies ſhould be deprived of the rites of ſepulture. It is not improbable that Zeroaſter, the founder of the religion of the Perſees, when he inſtituted this cuſtom, had a view to ſome public advantage. He might perhaps intend to impreſs on the minds of his followers, that the eſſence of man is in the ſoul, to which the groſs animal-part, is no more than a covering or vehicle, conſiſting of material particles, capable of a variety of modifications; that it was of little importance after death how this terreſtrial ſubſtance was diſpoſed of; whether it paſſed into another animal body, or was tranſmuted into ſome production of vegetable nature. He might alſo wiſh to diſcountenance the ſuperſtition of the neighbouring nations, who conceived that the ſoul remained a reſt-

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leſs wanderer in the regions below, till the body had been committed to the earth. The reſt of the inhabitants of Bombay are for the moſt part Gentoos. But the knowledge I have as yet acquired reſpecting them, is ſo trifling, that I do not think it worthy of your attention.

Bombay is ſo inconſiderable in itſelf, that if it were not the only place in India where we can build ſhips, it would hardly be worth the charge of keeping. But the advantage of its Docks and Yards has induced the India Company to expend large ſums in fortifications, ſo as to make it impregnable againſt the attack of an enemy. It imports all its proviſions; and indeed it would be ſcarcely poſſible for an iſland, which is at moſt only thirty miles in circumference, to ſupply, from its own funds, the conſumption of ſixty thouſand inhabitants, which is nearly the amount of the preſent population of Bombay. The

European

European inhabitants of this ſettlement are reſerved in their manners, and ſhew no hoſpitality to ſtrangers. The ſocial virtues ſeem to be in no eſtimation with them. It may be perhaps objected, that it is raſh, if not ungenerous, to pronounce in ſo deciſive a manner againſt them, but the character they have borne at all times ſufficiently warrants the cenſure. On our paſſage to the coaſt of Coromandel, we put in at Tellicherry, which ſupplies the greater part of the pepper that is exported by the Company to Europe. This little ſettlement was beſieged by an army of ten thouſand men for eighteen months; but the ſiege was raiſed the beginning of laſt January by Major Abington, who, with a detachment of only two hundred men, took the enemy's commander priſoner, with all his baggage, artillery, and ſtores.

From hence we ſet ſail for Anjango, another ſmall ſettlement, valuable for

the large quantity of pepper it produces, and for the opportunity it affords of watching the motions of the enemy who are at Ceylon. But, receiving information by the way that the French fleet was waiting for us at Cape Comorin, we thought it proper to return. Colonel Humberſtone, wiſely judging that we ſhould be of more uſe at Calicut than at Bombay, ordered us to diſembark on the 27th of January, to join Major Abington, who had arrived four days before us, and had taken poſſeſſion of the place. On the very day of our landing, a diſpute, which we had every reaſon to expect, took place between Colonel Humberſtone and the major reſpecting the command of the troops. According to the King's orders, whenever one detachment joins another, the officer eldeſt in rank takes the command. On this principle Colonel Humberſtone could not receive the orders of an inferior, without injury to his honour as a military

military man. On the other hand, it is an eſtabliſhed rule in the Company's ſervice, never to give up a command without poſitive orders for that purpoſe: but the high and threatening tone of the colonel induced Major Abington to ſurrender a command, which it was, perhaps, his duty to have kept.

Colonel Humberſtone, after having thus rid himſelf of a rival, ſoon found an opportunity to diſplay his courage, and make a rapid fortune. The troops which had been defeated at Tellicherry and Calicut, and by the articles of capitulation had been left at liberty, had collected themſelves into a body, and ſeized a ſmall fort, which cut off all communication to the Southward, from whence we drew our proviſions. As the ſecret of ſubſiſting an army without ſupplies has not yet been diſcovered, the commanding officer reſolved to drive them from this poſt. On the 6th of laſt April we prepared to execute this reſolution.

reſolution. We were then almoſt all ſick, and our companies, which were ninety or a hundred ſtrong when we left England, conſiſted at moſt of twenty men each who were little fit for the ſervice on which they were to be employed. The change of diet had given to the troops a diarrhœa, which was ſucceeded by fluxes and violent fevers, fatal to great numbers. But this was not all; the cramp, a diſeaſe little known to European phyſicians, made great ravages in the army. A variety of conjectures have been formed reſpecting the cauſe of this laſt diſtemper; but I am of opinion that our injudicious management of the ſoldiers ſufficiently accounts for it. The tents we had brought from England were pitched immediately on our arrival, and ſix men were appointed to each, as is uſual in the colder climates. Theſe poor devils were almoſt ſuffocated with the heat, but when the ſea breeze ſet in at flood tide, they ran out naked to

breathe

breathe a little cool air. As their pores were open, and their perſpiration exceſſive, they were unable to bear ſo violent a contraſt. Their blood received a ſudden chill, and many were ſeized with the painful contractions of the cramp, which ſoon terminated in death. If, inſtead of tents, we had lodged them in huts made of the cocoa leaf, and had compelled them to remain under that ſhelter day and night, till they had been ſeaſoned to the climate, it is more than probable we ſhould have preſerved them from that dreadful evil. The others might, perhaps, have been obviated, if, inſtead of allowing our men a diet of freſh meat and vegetables, we had confined them entirely to the uſe of ſalt proviſions. Nothing is trifling which concerns the health and lives of men: and I make this obſervation for the benefit of thoſe who may chance to peruſe theſe letters.

The

The firſt day of the campaign we marched as far as Bauport, a ſmall town, diſtant nine miles from our camp. Many of our men were ſo weak that they fell down by the way. The next day we reached a village called Camarin, where we waited a few days for orders from Colonel Humberſtone, who had ſet out from Calicut with the flank companies of the army to retake Triquelor, the fort in queſtion, at which place he arrived a few days before us. When he came in ſight of the enemy's camp, he was much ſurpriſed to find them drawn up in order of battle. And, to come within reach of them, it was neceſſary to paſs a very dangerous defile, which would certainly have been fatal to us if it had been defended by any perſon poſſeſſed of a little military ſkill.

Our troops had no ſooner advanced than they were attacked by a body of horſe, which was repulſed and broken by a ſingle one-pounder. A few of our companies

companies formed immediately, and aſſailing the enemy, forced them to turn their backs; they then purſued them to a neighbouring village, and, after the ſlaughter of four hundred men, they made a like number priſoners of war. Many of the vanquiſhed in flying from our bayonets, threw themſelves down the precipices; others periſhed miſerably in attempting to croſs a neighbouring river. Thus was a poſt of great conſequence, and garriſoned, according to the beſt accounts, by ſix thouſand men, retaken by four hundred, who ſuſtained no other loſs than two officers and ten privates killed and wounded.

We received the news of this ſucceſs at Camarin, and at the ſame time orders to join the colonel. On our arrival at Triquelor we beheld a ſpectacle truly dreadful; the town, with all its wealth, reduced to aſhes; thouſands of families ruined; widows tearing their hair, and lamenting over the bodies of their dead huſbands;

huſbands; beautiful virgins, who had been on the eve of enjoying the pleaſures of mutual love, deploring the irretrieveable loſs of the objects of their affection; in ſhort, ſuch a various and expreſſive picture of miſery and deſolation, as excited in us the livelieſt impreſſion of the horrors of war. Alas! my dear friend, how high a price do we pay for military honours when we are obliged to familiariſe our feelings to ſuch ſcenes as theſe.

On the twelfth the whole army marched to Enticata, a ſmall Fort, diſtant twelve miles from Triquelor. Here the enemy had rallied, but our bayonets had ſtruck ſuch terror into their minds, that they retreated as ſoon as we came in ſight, and left us maſters of the field.

LETTER VIII.

Tenor, 16th May, 1784.

BEFORE we proceed any farther, it will not, perhaps, be thought impertinent to give a ſlight ſketch of Hyder Ally, as well as a ſhort account of our affairs in India, as far as that extraordinary character is concerned with them.

Hyder, according to the beſt authorities, was once a private ſoldier in the French army: in this ſituation he made ſuch a rapid progreſs in the military art, that he ſoon thought himſelf qualified to fill a more reſpectable appointment under ſome of the country princes. He made a tender of his ſervices to the Nabob of the Inyſore, who readily accepted them; and ſoon after, as a reward for his conduct and abilities, placed him in an office of great

of

importance, and which gave him acceſs to the perſon of the ſovereign. Hyder was not long in gaining the favour of his maſter, who raiſed him to the dignity of prime miniſter and commander in chief of his armies. You will naturally ſuppoſe that ſuch extraordinary marks of favour muſt have produced in the breaſt of Hyder the warmeſt ſentiments of attachment and gratitude. Indeed it was not long before he gave the moſt ſtriking proofs of his high ſenſe of the obligations conferred upon him. He ſaw his benefactor loaded with the cares and troubles inſeparable from the kingly office, and determined to ſet him at eaſe and take the whole burthen of them upon himſelf; and, that this noble reſolution might be carried into full effect, he with his own hand murdered the Nabob and his three ſons. Out of pure kindneſs to the inhabitants of the Myſore he undertook to govern them, and, as the dominions of his predeceſſor were of too ſmall an

extent

extent for the great deſigns he was meditating, he added to them thoſe of his neighbours, whoſe weakneſs made them an eaſy conqueſt to his ſuperior military ſkill. On the general wreck he has eſtabliſhed his own fortunes, carrying his victorious arms againſt the moſt formidable powers of India, till at laſt he has rendered himſelf the greateſt and moſt potent prince of the whole peninſula. Sometime ago he penetrated into the Carnatic, and as our army was not yet aſſembled, he made a very rapid progreſs in the country: at preſent he is at a very ſhort diſtance from Madras, which he ſeems to threaten with a ſiege.

It would be a great point in order to gain time for our troops, to oblige him to turn his arms to ſome other quarter. It would be, perhaps, no difficult matter to accompliſh this object; for the part of Hindoſtan, from whence I am now writing, furniſhes him with almoſt all the rice with which his army is ſub-

ſiſted. Now if we could cut off his ſupplies, or even make him believe that ſuch was our plan, it is highly probable that he would evacuate our territories, and turn his attention to the ſecurity of thoſe poſſeſſions which are eſſential to his future proſecution of the war. It was with this view that Colonel Humberſtone formed at Antioch a plan for the attack of Palicochery, a conſiderable fort, which commands the ſtrait between the Malabar and Coromandel coaſt: this project was diſcuſſed in a council of war, conſiſting of the company's officers; but they were of opinion that the execution of it was not to be attempted. Their real motive for rejecting a plan ſo evidently favourable to the intereſts of the company, is yet unknown. The reaſons upon which they pretended their opinions were founded, are, that the wet ſeaſon would have overtaken us on our march; that the rivers, being ſwollen by the rains,

would

would have overflowed their banks, and rendered a retreat impracticable. But fact is that we enjoyed ſix weeks of fine weather after the council of war was held; and I am rather inclined to think that the members were actuated in their deciſion either by jealouſy of ſuperior merit, or the fear of penetrating ſo far into an enemy's country under the conduct of ſuch a young officer as Colonel Humberſtone.

This project being rejected we ſet out on the fifteenth for Turnevy, a ſmall village, where a few of the enemy had taken poſt: their ſpies had informed them that we were in motion, and they had retreated before our arrival. On the march we ſuffered greatly from the exceſſive heat which was fatal to fifteen of our men: the forerunner of their death was a dreadful delirium, during which they attempted to lay violent hands on every one that was near them, but in-

leſs than five minutes they fell to the ground, never to riſe again.

From Turnevy we departed for Pandiadigady, another ſmall village, where the firſt merchants, that came from Portugal, had their ſettlement.

Theſe adventurers lived for a conſiderable time on good terms with the natives; but, unable to refrain from the commerce of the fair ſex, their intrigues were diſcovered, and they were all maſſacred in the moſt cruel manner.

On the twentieth we marched to Tannor, a pleaſant town on the ſea ſhore, in an advantageous ſituation to cover the country from whence we drew our ſupplies. We remained here till we had collected proviſions ſufficient for our ſubſiſtence in winter quarters: while we were engaged in this buſineſs a detachment of the enemy's calvary ſet fire to the village of Pandiadigady.

On the twenty-ſixth all our detachments were called in on account of the rains which are uſually expected at this time. During the wet ſeaſon it is impoſſible to remain in the field, and the natives will not riſk their perſons at ſea in the belief that it is enraged, and puniſhes the preſumption of thoſe who are raſh enough to embark upon it. The preſent monſoon has been very moderate; we have ſeldom had more than five or ſix days of continued rain, and theſe have been followed by an equal number of fine days: but it ſet in, as it commonly does, with ſome violence; two ſhips that were following the army were driven on ſhore, but fortunately no lives were loſt.

I muſt not paſs over the Indian ceremony of making peace with the ſea. On the eighteenth of the preſent month the Gentoos go in proceſſion to the ſea ſhore dancing, ſinging, and offering up prayers: they then proceed to throw

ſome cocoa nut into the ſea in token of amity and reconciliation; and as it is an article of their belief that a good and merciful ſpirit reſides in every part of the univerſe, they think that he receives their offerings with complacency, and is rendered propitious by their prayers. As ſoon as this ceremony has been performed they ſuppoſe they can ſafely venture to ſea.

The abject ſtate of the Poliars greatly excited my curioſity; and, during the leiſure of the rainy ſeaſon, I collected ſuch information reſpecting them, as you may rely upon. I have often aſked how it was poſſible that a caſt ſo truly wretched could exiſt; but never could obtain a ſatisfactory anſwer. At laſt my difficulties were cleared up by a man, who is ſaid to be very converſant in the hiſtory of the people of Hindoſtan. He tells me that the Poliars are the indigenous inhabitants of the country; that they

they were conquered by the Nairs ſome thouſand years ago, who put the greater number of the people to the ſword, driving the remainder into the woods and mountains, where their deſcendants have continued without ever daring to approach any houſe or other inhabited place. If any member of a ſuperior caſt happens to meet one of theſe wretches even on the high road, he infallibly kills him, and the unfortunate victim ſubmits to the loſs of life without a murmur. How great muſt be the force of cuſtom when it can thus reconcile us to our own deſtruction! The Poliars are employed by the Nairs in the cultivation of their lands, and think themſelves well rewarded if at ſome hundred yards from the houſe a little rice is left for their uſe; and if any one be in ſight when they go to fetch it, they are obliged to crawl to it on their bellies, and carry it off with all the expedition they are capable of.

After the conqueſt I have juſt ſpoken of the Nairs divided the lands, and remained a long time in peaceable poſſeſſion of them, lording it over all the other caſts, and abandoning themſelves to the enjoyments of luxury and ſenſuality. Accuſtomed and attached to a military life, they determined to eſtabliſh no uſages but ſuch as ſhould be favourable to the independence of a ſoldier. On this account they allowed their women to eſpouſe four huſbands, in order that the cares of a family might be leſſened to themſelves, and the weaker ſex, from the number of their huſbands, be ſecure of not being left without protection and ſupport. But it appears to me that there is another reaſon which, with quite as much probability, may be aſſigned for this cuſtom: Weak as man is by his nature he cannot command his own inclinations. How many happy pairs have we ſeen, who, united by the bonds of the moſt ardent affection, enjoy no

pleaſure

pleaſure but in each other's arms: whoſe every thought, word, and action, has had no relation but to their mutual love? Yet this paſſion, theſe deſires, which one ſhould have thought immortal, have yielded to the power of time or the ſatiety of enjoyment; and perhaps have been directed to a new object. If the fear of cenſure, the prejudices of childhood, or a reſpect for received opinions, have reſtrained them, they have been wretched, and years of pain have ſucceeded to moments of pleaſure. Whence ariſe all the bitter cares of life but from ill ſorted connexions in matrimony? Is it poſſible that love, which is the only paſſion capable of making our lives happy, ſhould be ſo univerſally the cauſe that imbitters them? A legiſlator who ſhould have eſtabliſhed a free intercourſe of the ſexes, conſiſtent with the public good, would indiſputably have rendered a great ſervice to humanity.

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The Nairs appear to me to be nearer the accompliſhment of this object than the Europeans.

The women uſually live in ſquare houſes, which have a door in every front, each appropriated to a particular huſband. Whenever one of theſe is in the houſe his ſlippers are left at the entrance as a ſignal that the others are not to approach. Here you may ſee a tender lover burning with impatience to throw himſelf into the arms of his miſtreſs, but obliged to curb his deſires and retire, becauſe ſhe is in poſſeſſion of another. As ſoon as he is at liberty to approach, he proceeds to revel in all the delights of love, free from care, free from jealouſy of thoſe who partake in their turn of the object of his paſſion. This people certainly enjoy all the pleaſures of love without the alloy of thoſe dark ſuſpicions, that reſtleſs anxiety, which are ſo frequently the price of theſe with us. This is an

additional

additional proof of the influence of cuſtom on the manners and character of a people.

The Nairs are treated with the higheſt reſpect: in former ages they were conſidered as little inferior to gods; and the body of the people ſubmitted without a murmur to perform the moſt abject and humiliating ſervices at their pleaſure. The women in particular, to ſhew their devotion to theſe haughty maſters, laid aſide the modeſty of their ſex; whenever the Nairs paſſed near them, they threw off their outer garments, and happy was the woman whoſe charms could attract their notice, or obtain the honour of a ſingle careſs. Thus, till the introduction of Mahometiſm, did the Nairs riot in all the luxury of power and ſenſual gratifications. The emperor, charmed with the picture of the paradiſe of Mahomet, left his throne and abjured the religion of his anceſtors, to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. He divided his territory into

equal

equal parts, which he diſtributed among ſuch of his officers as were of approved fidelity: hence it is that one ſees on this coaſt many perſons filling the kingly office who are of very low extraction. Theſe grants, however, were made on condition that the holders of them ſhould pay tribute to the zamorin, or emperor, as to their ſovereign. But it is not in the nature of man to pay homage to his equals, or bear the burthen of a yoke he can ſhake off. Theſe petty kings, therefore, aſſumed independence in their reſpective territories; and, ſtimulated by the love of military enterpriſe, and the thirſt of adding to their poſſeſſions, they ſoon waged war on each other. The voluptuous Nairs, whoſe only occupation is the ſervice of their princes in the field, were now obliged to relinquiſh for ſome time the eaſe and pleaſure they enjoyed in their houſes. But they did not long ſuffer this privation. Theſe wars which, it might naturally be imagined, would have been

long

long and bloody, were brought to a ſpeedy termination. The contending princes were driven by their reciprocal fears to accommodate their differences, and the happy Nairs returned from the toils and dangers of war to the enjoyment of their accuſtomed voluptuouſneſs. They were long in peaceable poſſeſſion of the privileges of their caſt, till at laſt the country was attacked by the invincible Hyder Ally. Every expedient was tried to thwart the deſigns of this formidable enemy. The zamorin, who was in poſſeſſion of the defili, which is the key of the country, ſpared no efforts in oppoſing his paſſage. He called together all the princes of the country, and repreſented, in the livelieſt colours, the dangers with which they were threatened, and the reſtraints and tyranny to which the Nairs would be expoſed under a ſovereign of a different religion. The conſequence of this repreſentation was, that they all united in defence of the common cauſe.

But

But what avails courage without military diſcipline? They had no other arms but matchlocks, ſpears, ſwords, bows, and ſlings; all inſufficient againſt the attack of regular battalions well armed, covered by good artillery and a powerful body of cavalry. For Hyder had adopted all the European diſcipline. The Nairs, however, did their duty with a degree of courage worthy of their anceſtors. In ſpite of Hyder's heavy artillery, which felled whole ranks of them, they advanced boldly to the attack, and made a dreadful ſlaughter in his army. Diſcipline, however, triumphed over valour, and Hyder obtained a complete victory. He made one or two princes priſoners; but the zamorin, with the ſhattered remains of his army, retired to the mountains, where he continued till our arrival. Nothing now remained for the conqueror but to take poſſeſſion of the country. He has ſent ſeveral powerful detachments to attack the zamorin in the

place

place of his retreat, but hitherto they have met with little ſucceſs; they have even been unable to prevent that prince from collecting the revenue of the country which is in the vicinity of the mountains.

The zamorin has offered to raiſe troops, and ſupport the whole expence of the campaign, provided we put him in poſſeſſion of Palicochery. This plan is exactly ſimilar to that of Colonel Humberſtone; and I have no doubt but our next operations will be directed to that quarter. If the fine weather ſhould continue, we hope to take the field at the beginning of the enſuing month.

LETTER IX.

Paniana, Dec. 20, 1782.

WE left Calicut the ſecond of laſt September, and *on the ſixth arrived at Paniana.* This pleaſant town is ſituated at a ſmall diſtance from the ſea, on the banks of a river which is every way navigable up to Palicochery. Our preſence here was politically neceſſary, in order to keep Hyder and the Dutch, who were at Cochin, equally in doubt with reſpect to our future intentions. We had diſſeminated a report that our plans were directed againſt the Dutch ſettlements, which in conſequence made great preparations for their defence, while Hyder was lulled into a dangerous ſecurity. We were joined at Paniana by our heavy artillery and ſtores, which had been tranſported thither by ſea, becauſe we had neither bullocks nor horſes

to draw them. Immediately on their arrival they were removed into flat-bottomed boats, to be tracked up the river.

As ſoon as we had completed all our preparations we departed from Paniana. On the nineteenth we reached Tartally, a great pagoda ſo called, which is only at the diſtance of ten miles from the advanced poſts of the enemy. Here our new allies, the Nairs, gave us a ſample of the courage and aſſiſtance we were to expect from them. Some thouſands of them had been poſted without our lines; but, deſcrying five or ſix horſemen, they fled with great precipitation to the camp, alarming us with an account that they had ſeen a body of ſeveral thouſand men. This is a ſtriking example of the effect of tyranny on the minds and characters of men. Ever ſince Hyder has been in poſſeſſion of their country, he has ſpared no pains to depreſs their ſpirits; and ſo well has he ſucceeded, that the very

men who oppoſed his invaſion with the valour of heroes, are become the moſt puſillanimous cowards on the face of the earth.

We remained at Tartally till the arrival of our ſtores, which had been tracked up the river with great labour and difficulty on account of the rapidity of the current. We were ſtill waiting in expectation of Colonel Humberſtone, who was gone with a detachment to the ſouthward, in order to facilitate the collection of the revenues as well as to meet an ambaſſador from the king of Travancore. The reſult of their conference was a promiſe that eight thouſand men ſhould be furniſhed from Travancore to garriſon the fort of Palicocherry, in caſe our plan againſt that place ſhould ſucceed; and an offer of an immediate reinforcement of twelve hundred men, which the colonel accepted of, and added to our army.

On the twenty-ninth we reached Ramagory, a citadel ſtrongly ſituated on the top of a lofty mountain forty miles to the eaſtward of Paniana. While we were buſied in throwing up entrenchments, and making other preparations for the ſiege of this fortreſs, the enemy made a ſally, and ſurpriſed the detachment that was covering the workmen. Our people immediately quitted their poſt, and fled with wonderful agility, ſuſtaining no other loſs than that of the working tools. A few days after the fort was evacuated, and we were put into poſſeſſion of it without farther conteſt.

On the eleventh of October we continued our march, and on the twelfth arrived at Mongary Cotta, a ſmall fort, in ſo bad a ſituation, and ſo ill fortified, that its garriſon capitulated as ſoon as we had inveſted the place.

We continued here, collecting proviſions, till the ſeventeenth, when we

croſſed a neighbouring river. The enemy made a feeble attempt to prevent our paſſage, but without any effect. On the eighteenth we penetrated as far as their winter quarters; and their whole army came out apparently with the intention of oppoſing our progreſs; but the ſight of our bayonets had ſuch an effect upon them, that they preſently betook themſelves to flight, ſetting fire, in their retreat, to their camp and the neighbouring town.

On the nineteenth we came to a mountain within twelve hundred paces of the fort of Palicocherry and forty miles eaſt of Paniana. The enemy kept up a continual cannonade during the whole of this and the ſucceeding day, but without effecting any greater miſchief than killing four Sepoys.

Palicocherry had been repreſented to us as an impregnable fortreſs, and our whole army was put in motion to reconnoitre it, in order that we might not incumber

incumber ourſelves with a larger quantity of ſtores and ammunition than the ſiege would require. After ſufficient obſervation had been taken of the works, we were ordered to return, that ſuch preparations might immediately be made as were neceſſary to the ſucceſs of our enterpriſe. Our beſt troops marched in front, and were followed by the baggage, which was under the protection of a ſtrong guard. The enemy, who kept a watchful eye upon us, took advantage of this diſpoſition, and attacked our rear. If our proviſions had been carried by men of the leaſt reſolution, we ſhould have loſt nothing; but the wretched Poliars, who had the charge of them, no ſooner ſaw the enemy than they threw down their burthens and fled into a neighbouring wood. The firſt onſet was feeble; but, as we were thrown into ſome confuſion, the enemy preſſed upon us, and a kind of ſkirmiſh enſued, in which we ſuſtained an irreparable loſs in the perſon

of Major Hutchinſon, who received a wound of which he died in leſs than fifteen days. We were obliged to abandon all our baggage. I believe that the order of our march was not the beſt that might have been adopted. The commanding officer ought certainly to have ſecured our proviſions; but I do not think he deſerves all the blame that has been caſt upon him: he had put the baggage under the protection of a ſtrong guard; and we ſhould have ſuſtained no loſs but for the cowardice of the puſillanimous wretches who were employed to carry it.

We did not march far that day. The next, our army was in motion very early in the morning; and the rear-guard was unceaſingly haraſſed by the enemy, who killed and wounded many of our men. The whole army frequently halted; and Major Campbell was obliged to form the regiment he commanded, to repel the flying parties that haraſſed our march.

We

We expected to have reached Mongary Cotta that day; but the heavy rains had ſo ſwelled a river that lay in our road, that we found it impracticable to ford it with the artillery and ammunition. We paſſed the whole night on its banks in making rafts: early in the morning we had every thing neceſſary for our paſſage to the other ſide; and, before night, accompliſhed our march to Mongary Cotta without oppoſition. At this place we experienced all the hardſhips of a camp. Since the unlucky morning when we loſt our baggage we had hardly eaten any thing; and we continued for ſome time to ſuffer the unappeaſable cravings of hunger without even the hope of relief. At laſt rice was obtained; and this, with a little bad beef, was our whole ſuſtenance for near twelve days. Thus were we ſituated in the moſt intemperate ſeaſon of the year, without tents, without proviſions, or liquors, to keep up the ſpirit of our ſoldiers, and

enable them to bear up againſt the accumulated evils they were expoſed to.

The want of proviſions, and the continued rains, occaſioned univerſal diſcontent and murmurs throughout the army. Humberſtone was accuſed of having occaſioned the loſs of the baggage, and of having taken the field at too early a period of the ſeaſon. Deſertion was a very frequent crime among our ſoldiers, and the ſevereſt puniſhments did not deter them; in fact, a declared mutiny was very much apprehended. I ſpeak it with ſhame; but ſeveral officers were mean enough to arraign, in publick, the meaſures of their commander in chief.

When the danger of the campaign is over, the ſilence of an officer, who ſhould not make an ingenuous declaration of his ſentiments in regard to the conduct of his ſuperiors, might be attributed to no very honourable motives. If they have deſerved well, it is but juſt that the publick ſhould be appriſed of their merit;

if,

if, on the contrary, they are liable to cenſure, there is no inducement which ſhould perſuade thoſe who have been eye-witneſſes of their miſconduct not to bring them forward to the ſcrutiny of the world. The conduct of a man high in office is a leſſon to thoſe in ſimilar ſituations; and free obſervations reſpecting it can have no other ill conſequence than that of expoſing the obſerver to the effects of private reſentment. But to depreciate the character, or condemn the meaſures, of a commanding officer, when an army is ſurrounded by powerful enemies, without any ſhelter from the inclemency of the air, and ſuffering the want of the common neceſſaries of life, is, if not a crime, at leaſt an act of folly little ſhort of madneſs; and which, whatever excuſe may be drawn from the palpable impropriety of the conduct complained of, ought to ſuffer the full rigour of military law. A commanding officer, who overlooks ſuch a breach

breach of diſcipline, is not aware of the injury he does to the ſervice.

It was obſerved that the young men bore the hardſhips of the ſervice with much more reſolution than the old; and I have often heard it aſſerted that, if all our ſoldiers had been young men, not a ſingle complaint would have been heard in the camp. Theſe notions, though contrary to the received opinions on this ſubject, appear to me to have ſome foundation. It is well known that thoſe habits which have grown old with us are difficult to break. Now a ſoldier, who has ſerved ten or twelve years in England, who has taken his food, and performed his duty, at regular and ſtated times, cannot but find himſelf ill at eaſe in a ſituation like ours; while thoſe who have been accuſtomed to irregular living, and have enliſted in the expectation of being immediately expoſed to the hardſhips of actual ſervice, ſupport all the fatigues and privations of a campaign without

without a murmur. I do not pretend that young ſoldiers are in every reſpect preferable to the old; for men accuſtomed to the uſe of arms have neceſſarily more confidence, reſolution, and activity, than thoſe who have but recently embarked in the army. At the ſame time it is very difficult to conquer the habits which ſoldiers have acquired in a long courſe of home ſervice in England.

Tippoo Saib, the ſon of Hyder Ally, no ſooner heard that we were on the point of attacking Palicocherry, than he ſecretly collected all the troops he could aſſemble in the country of Tanjore, with a view to cut off our retreat. Colonel Humberſtone, appriſed of his intention, repaſſed the river at Mongary Cotta as ſoon as it was fordable; and, as there was reaſon to apprehend that Tippoo would not come down to us if we retreated too ſuddenly, we encamped near the fort, and continued making roads,

and

and every other preparation that looked like perſevering in the deſign of beſieging Palicocherry. The enemy now and then let off a few rockets at us, but without any effect. Tippoo thought that we really intended to attack Palicocherry; and Colonel Lang appriſed Colonel Humberſtone of this opinion. On the twelfth we quitted Mongary Cotta, after having blown up the works. On the following day we reached Ramagery, where we remained till the nineteenth. We conceived ourſelves to be in the moſt perfect ſecurity, and ſhould probably have been ſurpriſed if the king of Travancore's ſpies had not informed us, that Tippoo was preparing to attack us with his whole force. We had hardly marched out of our camp when he began a very hot fire on our rear guard; but the activity of Major Campbell, and the firmneſs and reſolution of the troops under his command, kept the enemy at ſuch a diſ-

tance,

tance, that the fire of the cannon and muſquetry was no more than an empty noiſe.

We proſecuted our march, without paying much attention to the weak attempts of Tippoo's army, when, towards the night, we were ſtopped by a river which proved not to be fordable. We now began to think that every river we were to meet with was to be fatal to our progreſs. In what a dreadful ſituation did we then find ourſelves! Expoſed for a full half hour to the fire of an army thirty times more numerous than our own; without ammunition or proviſions, and reduced to the hard neceſſity of making a deſperate effort, or laying down our arms to a barbarous foe. While we were revolving this dreadful alternative in our minds, on a ſudden the waters ſunk to ſuch a degree as allowed the elephants to tranſport the artillery and ammunition to the oppoſite bank of the river: they were followed by the troops,

troops, who paſſed the ford unnoticed by the enemy; and, though the water came up to their chins, we did not loſe a ſingle man. It is ſaid that Tippoo cut off the head of the man who brought him this news, as a puniſhment for what he thought a lie. He could not be perſuaded that we had eſcaped him. In fact, this buſineſs was conducted with extraordinary addreſs, and did great credit to the maſterly ability of Colonel Humberſtone.

We did not loſe a moment of time till we had left the river four miles behind us; we then reſted for two hours on our arms. At break of day we croſſed another river; but the enemy was too much in our rear to give us any uneaſineſs. We continued our march, and arrived at Paniana before night. This town has the ſea on one ſide, and a river on the other: it is covered in front by a wood and a moraſs, and has in its rear an extenſive plain. Colonel Macleod,

who had arrived here a few days before our return, took the command of the army, which he poſted to the greateſt advantage for the defence of the place. Our men were employed night and day in throwing up works; which, however, were hardly begun before the enemy prepared to retrieve the diſgrace they had ſuffered a few days before. On the eighteenth Tippoo attacked our front with his whole army: he was ſo near ſucceeding in his deſign of ſurpriſing us, that ſome French ſoldiers, who led the van of one of the columns, had got footing on the only part of our works which had any appearance of a regular fortification before they were perceived by the centries. The latter, however, did not, as is commonly the caſe on ſuch emergencies, loſe their preſence of mind; they remained firm on their poſts, and having alarmed the guard, all thoſe of the enemy, who were found on the ramparts, were either killed or taken priſoners.

priſoners. Major Campbell, who had the command of this poſt, came down with the forty-fifth regiment: his military ardour would not allow him to confine himſelf to act merely on the defenſive; he ventured to attack the immenſe column that was before him, and repulſed it with great carnage. The affair went no further; for the enemy, having been repulſed at every quarter they attempted, did not think it prudent to return to the charge. They remained at a conſiderable diſtance all the reſt of the day, contenting themſelves with keeping up a random fire upon us from their cannon and muſquetry. The loſs on our ſide was very conſiderable: we had eighteen officers wounded, and one taken priſoner. In the enemy's army the killed and wounded amounted to three thouſand men. From this day Tippoo ſet about a regular ſiege of the place; which in three weeks was entirely blockaded. However the works were hardly finiſhed before the death

death of Hyder Ally was announced. This event reſcued us from inevitable deſtruction.

The preciſe time of Tippoo's retreat after this news is not known; it was ſeveral days before we perceived it. But, in ſpite of all the diligence he uſed, he ran great riſks of being deprived of his father's dominions by an officer who had much aſcendancy over the army. Tippoo's French troops, however, and his formidable train of artillery, ſecured to him the inheritance of Hyder's empire.

When Colonel Humberſtone found that he could not avoid coming to action with Tippoo, inſtead of remaining inactive in the heart of the country, he ought to have fortified ſome poſt on the ſea coaſt, and have lodged in it all the proviſions he could collect, as a reſource in caſe of neceſſity. This precaution having been neglected, we were reduced, a few days after our arrival at Paniana, to

ſubſiſt on half the uſual allowance of proviſions. Our ſoldiers ſupported this, and all the other hardſhips inſeparable from our ſituation, with great reſolution; their ſpirits were probably kept up by the encouraging language of the officers, who cheerfully aſſiſted their labours whenever it was neceſſary. Nevertheleſs we muſt ultimately have ſtarved, or have laid down our arms, but for the accidental arrival of a ſhip which brought us proviſions.

I have ſometimes thought that the proportion of officers to private men was too great; but I now ſee that they are the ſoul of their companies; and that good or ill ſucceſs in war depends entirely upon them. No ſoldier will heſitate to advance if an officer is by his ſide. Hunger, dangers, and even death, will not daunt his courage when he ſees his ſuperiors content with the ſame fare, and ſharing the ſame evils. Armies are huge machines, the effect of which depends

depends upon thoſe who ſet them in motion. A ſmall army of intelligent officers, who ſhould all be zealous in the diſcharge of their duty, would, I have no doubt, overcome all the troops in the world; notwithſtanding that the uſe of fire-arms and of the bayonet has, in a great meaſure, rendered individual exertion of ſmall effect in the hour of action.

LETTER X.

Paniana, Dec. 24, 1782.

LET us turn our eyes from the tragic ſcenes we have juſt contemplated, to conſider, for a while, objects of a more pleaſing nature; of this kind is agriculture. The country about Paniana is in a ſtate of the higheſt cultivation. Its grain evinces the richeſt fertility of ſoil, and its extenſive plains are laid into ſmall encloſures, all of them ſurrounded by banks two feet high; theſe are intended to retain the rains that fall during the wet ſeaſon, the quantity of which is the meaſure of the probable plenty of the enſuing year.

The farmer, in this part of the world, makes no ſhew with his inſtruments of huſbandry: his plough is of the form of a wedge, and is very coarſely made; with this he makes furrows in the ground

ground about two feet aſunder and two inches in depth; having caſt his ſeed rice into them he has performed all the work neceſſary to inſure him a plentiful harveſt. He is not obliged, as the huſbandmen are with us, to enrich his land with manure, or prepare it for ſowing by deep and repeated ploughings.

In this country nature, ever young, ever vigorous, in her productions, appears inexhauſtible. Ground, which has been in conſtant cultivation for many ages, ſtill bears, in the ſame perfection, the ſame abundance of corn, graſs, and uſeful vegetables. Does not this circumſtance preſent a ſtrong contraſt between the ſoil of India and that of Europe? It is only by dint of induſtry that Europeans draw from their grounds ſufficient food for themſelves and their cattle; and unleſs the exhauſted fertility of the land is recruited by fallowing, or by plentiful ſupplies of manure, it in a ſhort time becomes ſteril and unpro-

ductive. How ſhall we account for this phenomenon? Shall we ſuppoſe that the operations of Nature in this climate are regulated by particular laws? Such a ſuppoſition might indeed meet with the aſſent of many lovers of the marvellous; but by thoſe who, like me, are convinced that Nature is every where the ſame, can by no means be admitted. To ſolve the queſtion we need only conſider the face of the country, and the great changes effected by the revolutions of the ſeaſons. In every part of India we ſee lofty mountains covered with trees, which have their heads in the clouds. Theſe natural alembics continually diſtil a large quantity of water, which ſupplies the ſources of numberleſs rivers, pouring riches and abundance on all the different regions of Aſia. To this cauſe of fertility we muſt add, that after the ſoil has been burnt up, and exhauſted by the intenſe heat of the ſun, the periodical rains burſt from the clouds, and continue

tinue to fall in the greateſt abundance for three or four months together: impetuous torrents ruſh down the mountains, the rivers are ſwollen, and, overflowing their banks, deluge the whole country, which remains a conſiderable time under water after the rains have ceaſed. This wet ſeaſon is attended by tremendous ſtorms, which, ſhaking the lofty and deep-rooted trees, open a number of channels to the water in the very bowels of the earth. During the dry months a great evaporation takes place, and the ground muſt neceſſarily be drained of its moiſture; but this is all reſtored by the rains, while the torrents waſh down from the mountains freſh ſalts and oils, and winds always blowing in one direction, waft with them from diſtant quarters every principle neceſſary to the perfection of vegetable life. Such are the cauſes of that aſtoniſhing fertility for which the climate of India has been in all ages diſtinguiſhed. As care

is taken to ſow the ground before the rainy ſeaſon ſets in, it is not neceſſary to dig it to ſo great a depth as is uſual in Europe; it is, in fact, ſo ſoftened by the water, that the roots of the germinating ſeeds eaſily ſtrike into it, and imbibe all the nouriſhment neceſſary for their developement and growth.

The oxen in this country are kept to very hard work; they are equally uſed for the cart and for the plough, as well as to carry for a whole day together a load of three hundred pounds weight. Theſe animals are of middling ſize, but perfectly well proportioned. Horſes are put to no other uſe than to carry their riders.

We found the roads in our way to Palicochery extremely bad; the fields were almoſt univerſally under water; and, as the river was not navigable from Ramagory, we were obliged to drag our cannon by land through the deep and miry ſloughs. In many places we were

obliged

obliged to fell trees for the purpoſe of making the road practicable to the train, the progreſs of which was ſo much retarded by the difficulties of our march, that not a ſingle piece of artillery had yet been brought up when Tippoo appeared for the ſuccour of Palicochery. If we had found fewer impediments on the road, it is more than probable that the ſiege would have been begun before his arrival, and we ſhould have been in a ſituation to withſtand him; but, circumſtanced as we then were, an immediate retreat was our only means of preſervation from the deſtruction which threatened us from the united efforts of two ſuch powerful enemies as the army of Tippoo and the garriſon of Palicochery. As our bullocks had not been ſufficient to bring up our artillery, being ſo weak that twelve of them were hardly able to draw a ſix-pounder, we eſcaped the loſs of all our cannon, which we muſt have left behind us in our precipitate retreat,

if

if it had not been detained on the march by the above-related circumſtances, which at the time we conſidered as peculiarly unfortunate. Thus it ſometimes happens, that what appears to be an evil is eventually productive of the greateſt good.

It is true we had elephants; but theſe animals are only fit for occaſional exertions of their prodigious ſtrength, being unequal to any continued labour. When a piece of artillery is ſunk in a bog they raiſe it with the utmoſt eaſe, and are able to carry a load of fifteen hundred weight on their backs without making any extraordinary effort; however, if any attempt is made to increaſe this burthen, they get out of humour, and throw the whole of it to the ground. They are very eaſily managed; the driver ſitting on their neck, turns them to either ſide, quickens or retards their pace by touching them on the ears with his feet; he is generally provided with a ſort of lance

crooked

crooked at the point; but this is an inſtrument of correction, and only uſed when they ſhew indocility or reſtiveneſs. I have been an eye-witneſs to ſo many inſtances of the great ſagacity of theſe animals, that I am not ſurpriſed at the many wonderful accounts we read of them. They know the voice of their driver; they underſtand the meaning of his words, and even appear to divine his thoughts. Promiſes and careſſes make them increaſe their exertions, and they retain a long remembrance of injuries and benefits, to which they make a ſuitable return. I have heard of a ſoldier, who, being ſentenced to ſuffer ſome military puniſhment, took refuge with an elephant; under whoſe protection he remained untouched for ſeveral days, ſharing with him in his rice and other food. Upon an inquiry I found that this extraordinary affection of the animal proceeded from his having been accuſtomed to receive fruit, ſpirits, &c. from the man.

Such a conduct in a friend would be called virtue, and would deſervedly be applauded by all good men. But what ſhall we call it in a brute? is it habit, or is it inſtinct? How plainly do we perceive the arbitrary uſe which man makes of his excluſive prerogative of affixing a meaning to oral ſounds. The elephant, wiſe, juſt, and grateful, is ſpoken of as no more than a machine; as if mere matter was capable of executing invariably in his ſpecies what reaſon, or the ſoul, with all its boaſted attributes and powers, is not capable of effecting (at leaſt univerſally) in the human kind. Muſt the brute after death ſink into annihilation, and the man flouriſh in immortality beyond the bounds of time? You muſt excuſe me for entertaining ſome doubts——but it is preſumption in a wretched journaliſt to touch upon ſuch thorny and difficult ſubjects, which lead to the profoundeſt depths of metaphyſical ſcience.

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All thoſe who have given the natural hiſtory of the elephant, aſſert that, in his domeſticated ſtate, he does not engender, chuſing a total abſtinence from the female, rather than to put in exiſtence a race of ſlaves. But this is not true. For a keeper of elephants, who is a man of undoubted veracity, aſſured me that they had bred with him; he, however, acknowledged that this fact was uncommon, and that to recruit his ſtock he uſually had recourſe to the dealers, or caught them in the woods. One of theſe animals has ſufficient ſtrength to draw a ſix-pounder for a whole day together; but they diſlike conſtant labour, and few of them have ſpirit enough to go through it. So that if we had had our artillery when Tippoo was in purſuit of us, it is not probable we ſhould have brought it off by our elephants.

Thoſe towns, which are ſituated on the ſea-ſhore, are for the moſt part inhabited by Mahometans. The Nairs, who look

look with a jealous eye on all other profeſſions of faith but their own, have not ſuffered theſe inhabitants of the maritime towns to have any conſiderable extent of territory; but by the advantages of their ſituation they have monopoliſed the trade of the whole country. They are agents to all thoſe who inhabit the inland parts; and, as great wealth has followed their induſtrious exertions, they have acquired a degree of reſpectability which gives them conſiderable weight in matters of the higheſt conſequence.

The Mahometans are, in appearance, a race of people much ſuperior to the other inhabitants; they are luſty and well made, and have countenances expreſſive of a haughty and martial ſpirit. It is no difficult matter to account for this diſtinction: for their riches enable them to enjoy all the comforts of life in abundance, and to marry as many women as they pleaſe, choſen not for the honours of their birth, or the amount of their

fortune,

fortune, but ſolely for their beauty. Now as children uſually reſemble their parents, it follows, that wherever the endowments of a graceful perſon are conſidered as the firſt requiſites in a wife, the children will be found handſome and well formed. The Spartans were ſo well aware of this, that they impoſed a mulct on one of their kings for having married a woman of low ſtature: "Kings," ſaid they, "cannot be pro-"duced from ſuch a marriage, but "rather the ſhadows of kings," [a kingling]. Do not imagine that, to appear a freethinker, I pretend to approve all the maxims of Mahometiſm: the general doctrine of the pſeudo-prophet is too abſurd to have any weight with a man of ſenſe. I acknowledge with pleaſure that I have not met with any religion in which the grandeur, the ſimplicity, the purity, the wiſdom, of the Chriſtian diſpenſation could be traced. Chriſtianity, indeed, is as far above every religious

religious impoſture that has deceived mankind, as the heavens are above the earth. None but the great power that created man could give him ſuch laws as were alone capable of improving his nature, and of inſpiring him with the love of peace and of charity. Neither could the ſublime notions of the attributes of God, which are every where ſet forth in the holy ſcriptures, have entered into the heart of man to conceive, without the direct influence of his holy Spirit. The philoſophers and other founders of religious ſects are idle babblers in compariſon with Jeſus Chriſt; for his goſpel, like a pure and ſhining light from heaven, ſhews us our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourſelves; and as no profit or advantage on earth could accrue to our Saviour and his diſciples from our belief in his divine miſſion; and as they were all perſecuted, even to death, for maintaining truths neceſſary to the ſalvation of mankind, the moſt

incredulous

incredulous muſt acknowledge that no worldly conſideration could poſſibly have influenced their conduct.

There can be nothing more whimſical and extravagant than the doctrines of Mahomet. At one time, a favourer of the precepts of Chriſtianity, he recommends them to the practice of his followers; at another, groſs and cruel, he preaches up perſecution and ſenſuality. Inſtead of that paradiſe, in which man, exalted to his utmoſt perfection, ſhall be admitted to the contemplation of the perfections of God, he promiſes nothing but ſenſual pleaſures; pleaſures which, in the unanimous opinion of the wiſe in all ages, degrade the faculties of man, and reduce him to the level of the brute creation. From ſome few paſſages of the Alcoran one would at firſt ſight be induced to think that he had a view to the encouragement of arts, ſciences, and commerce; but, on a cloſer examination, theſe are found to be clouded with obſcurity, and oppoſed by abſurd contradictions. He

has collected a few ſound ideas from our ſacred writings, but has blended them with ſo much puerile nonſenſe, that it is difficult to ſeparate the gold from the droſs; and the Divinity, who at leaſt ſhould have appeared a reaſonable being, is often made to ſpeak in the Alcoran the incoherent ravings of a madman.

The falſe prophet permits plurality of wives; the natural conſequence of which is unbridled ſenſuality and diſſoluteneſs. There is no refinement of incontinence which many good Muſſulmen do not allow themſelves; and that ſhocking crime, of which we even abhor the name, is frequently practiſed among them. The poſſeſſion of many women does not always reſtrain them from caſting an eye of deſire on the ſeraglio of their neighbour; and intrigues are not the leſs frequent becauſe ſecrecy is required to carry them on. The guards, the eunuchs, the difficulty of acceſs to women, are inconteſtible proofs of the

ſuſpicions they entertain of each other on this ſubject.

How can a man who is inceſſantly employed in the government of a dozen women, or in giving all of them proofs of his affection, improve his underſtanding, extend his knowledge, or ever acquire eminence in any art or ſcience. Our inclinations for the other ſex were intended to promote the multiplication of the ſpecies, and not to lead us to the indulgence of a ſenſuality deſtructive of that end. To build a religion upon pleaſures that ſhould be temperately enjoyed, is an inſtance of exceſſive folly and impudence, of which Mahomet alone was capable. But this is not all. Can the father of fifty children give all of them a proper education? Or, can he love every individual of ſo numerous a family with the ſame affection as if they were only three or four? Certainly not: and this is an additional reaſon why the Mahometans can never emerge from their

preſent ignorance and barbariſm; for their numerous children marry in their turn, and bring up their progeny with the ſame neglect of all uſeful knowledge. Hence the Mahometans are the moſt ſuperſtitious of men, and bear with paſſive ſubmiſſion the yoke of tyranny and oppreſſion.

But perhaps you would be glad to quit theſe grave reflections to inquire, whether the women did not oppoſe this religion on its firſt appearance in Arabia? whether they were not diſpleaſed at a diviſion of what was hardly ſufficient for one of them among ſo many? and whether they did not threaten to commit the prophet and all his proſelytes to the flames? laſtly, by what inducement they could have been influenced to embrace a new religion, which veſted ſuch abſolute power in the men, and required from them ſuch paſſive and unconditional obedience? Our haughty European women would certainly not bear

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with an apoſtle who ſhould deliver ſuch a doctrine; and we are told that the Thracian ladies tore Orpheus limb from limb merely becauſe he preferred the retirement of the woods to the pleaſures of their ſociety. Here, then, we have a ſtriking example of the revenge the ſex is capable of taking on thoſe whom they ſuſpect of holding them in contempt. In vain would a prophet exhibit his heavenly credentials, had he the gift of performing miracles, and could ſtop rivers in their courſe, or, like Orpheus, move the foreſts with the ſound of his voice, ſtill, if he ſhould preach ſuch a doctrine as this of Mahomet, not a ſingle woman would he convert, and legions of armed ſoldiers would not ſhield him from the juſt vengeance of the enraged ſex. The Arabian women, however, ſubmitted without a murmur; and I cannot find that Mahomet ever experienced, through them, any difficulty in the promulgation of tenets which in ſuch

a direct manner attacked their dearest prerogatives. I have done every thing in my power to obtain an explanation of this curious fact; I have searched history, I have inquired of living authorities, but all to no purpose; for I have not been able to obtain any satisfactory information on the subject. I have heard it said, that Mahomet promised that Heaven would endow all true believers with the same vigour as tradition records himself to have possessed: but I believe the impostor had too much cunning to hold out expectations which must so soon have been found deceitful. A few zealous Mussulmen have assured me that the faithful were gifted with extraordinary powers; and that, at any rate, the circumstance which moved my inquiry, was a strong proof of the truth of their holy religion. Thus it is, that every thing confirms the errors of superstition and credulity, if once men have fallen into them.

You

You know to what exceſs the Mahometans carry their jealouſy of women; they never ſuffer them to appear in publick. Conſcious of their inability to ſatisfy the deſires of ſo many wives, their only means of obviating its conſequences is to render the Haram inacceſſible to the approach of all other men.

LETTER XI.

Nagur, March 28, 1783.

THE government of Bombay received five hundred thouſand rupees from the Supreme Council of Bengal, for the purpoſe of making a more powerful diverſion than that attempted by Colonel Humberſtone. The project of attacking Onore, and the provinces which lay at the foot of the mountains, was immediately formed. From that ſpirit of jealouſy which prevails between the Company and the King's troops, Macleod was diveſted of his command in favour of Lieutenant Colonel Mathews, who received the commiſſion of Brigadier-General in the army of the Honourable Eaſt India Company.

Our new commander, with two or three battalions of Sepoys and a few hundred Europeans, diſembarked on the banks

banks of the river Mergy; and, having taken the ſmall fort of Rajamdrough by ſtorm, ſent orders to Macleod to join him immediately; you already know that Tippoo, after having made us ſuffer for ſome time all the hardſhips of a ſiege, by blocking us up in Paniana, had left us to take poſſeſſion of his inheritance on the demiſe of his father. It was at that place that we were waiting in peace for our orders.

We left Paniana the twenty-ninth of December 1782, and landed at Rajamdrough on the eighth of the enſuing January. The General, who was gone to take Onore, a fort of ſome conſequence about twenty miles to the ſouthward, diſpatched a meſſenger to us with orders to proceed againſt ſeveral ſmall forts at a ſhort diſtance within the country. We had, however, hardly begun our march before we received counter orders to join him as ſoon as poſſible at Onore; this we effected on the twelfth

twelfth of the ſame month. It was not any caprice of General Mathews that occaſioned this diverſity in his orders, but the poſitive inſtructions of the Council of Bombay, which directed him to turn his whole force upon Nagur, the capital of the province of Bedanore, and the reſidence of the Governor.

This town is at forty miles diſtance from the ſea, well fortified, and ſtrongly garriſoned. In order to get to it there is a neceſſity of croſſing mountains almoſt inacceſſible, and of forcing paſſes extremely narrow, and defended by ſucceſſive forts, which have hitherto been deemed impregnable. Our army, which conſiſts of four thouſand men (five hundred of whom are Europeans, and the reſt Sepoys) all in good order and excellent diſcipline, is very fit to be employed on ſuch an important enterpriſe. But we are in want of an eſſential requiſite, bullocks or horſes to draw our artillery, neither of which the Government have yet

ſent

ſent to us; and our bullocks amount to no more than a few, which are barely ſufficient for the baggage: coolies to carry the proviſions are alſo highly neceſſary, but none have as yet been diſpatched to us. In other reſpects there is a greatneſs in the plan worthy of the wiſdom of the Council that projected it. You wound the very vitals of the enemy when you attack his capital; for upon the fate of this uſually depends that of the provinces: if you ſucceed the people will be diſpirited, and will rarely be brought to rally againſt a victorious army which has already ſurmounted all the obſtacles that either courage or art have thrown in its way. The moſt warlike nations of antiquity would hardly have formed ſo bold a deſign. Hannibal uſed to ſay, that to conquer the Romans, it was neceſſary to attack Rome itſelf; and I believe that the opinion of Hannibal is good authority on a military topic. It is to be lamented that the want of a few

oxen

oxen and ſlaves ſhould have been any impediment to the execution of a plan which would have given to us the ſovereignty over India, and have eventually occaſioned ſo great a revolution in the politics of Europe. But a lucky ſtroke of fortune may perhaps obviate the effects of our improvidence. The day after our arrival at Onore, the General marched with two or three hundred men to Candapore; on the fifteenth we ſet out for the ſame place, and, arriving on the eighteenth, found that he had already taken it by ſtorm. He had met with little oppoſition; for the enemy, intimidated by the courage and activity diſplayed by the detachment of Bombay troops at the reduction of the other forts, fled almoſt as ſoon as our men appeared on the works. Candapore is a ſmall Fort, ſixty miles to the ſouthward of Onore.

Here the General gave an inſtance of partiality, as repugnant to juſtice, as it was inconſiſtent with all prudence and

ſound

found policy. He divided the army into brigades, giving the command of the ſecond to Major Futtrell. This officer had no other deſert, even in the eyes of the General, but that of being in the ſervice of the Company; while Major Shaw, of the hundredth regiment, added to ſeniority in military rank the merit of having acquired the eſteem and regard of all ſuperiors, by his active vigilance and ſtrict attention to the diſcharge of his duty as a good officer. The undeſerved indignity ſuffered by Major Shaw on this occaſion obliged him to retire from the army, and go to Bombay; in him we loſt a gallant and able officer. This extravagant act of injuſtice diſguſted the whole army, every individual proteſted againſt it; even the Company's officers, in whoſe favour it had been committed. The Bombay detachment made it a point to expoſe the conduct of a man who acted in ſuch open defiance of juſtice and propriety: it is true, however, that accounts of the partial

tial diſtribution of the plunder at Onore had reached their ears, and left impreſſions on their minds no way's favourable to the General. When you conſider the jealouſy that prevails between the King's and the Company's troops, you will be ſurprized that a man, whoſe duty required him to promote harmony by every means in his power, ſhould thus foment party contention and animoſity; but a more particular diſcuſſion of theſe matters would lead me too far from my ſubject.

On the twenty-fourth we took the field with few cannon, little ammunition, and no more proviſions than each ſoldier carried for his own uſe. We had orders to penetrate into the very heart of the country, and to reduce, in our way, ſome of the moſt formidable ſtrong holds. Our march on the twenty-fifth was very proſperous; and though ſome thouſands of the enemy, who were in ambuſcade on both ſides of us in the woods,

woods, fired ſeveral times upon us, we did not ſuffer the leaſt injury. We ſoon diſperſed them, and they incommoded us no more. In the afternoon we reached Seadapore, an agreeable town, in which we very opportunely found plenty of cattle, and a pagoda full of rice.

On the twenty-ſeventh we departed for Roſemgary; the road thither was croſſed by a rampart, behind which were poſted five or ſix hundred of the enemy. They made ſome impreſſion on our van before we were ſenſible of our danger: however, as there was no time for reflection, the advanced guard jumped on the rampart, and bayoneted all thoſe who offered the leaſt reſiſtance. We purſued the fugitives till they took ſhelter in a fort which is very near to Roſemgary, and at the end of a defile. The General was ſo inattentive to the procuring intelligence, that we were ignorant that this was a Fort till the next day, when it was evacuated. A man had offered to

give

give us full information of the ſtrength and ſituation of theſe places, on conſideration of a ſmall recompenſe; but from ill-judged economy his offers were rejected, and we remained in ignorance. If the General had thought proper to employ a guide, as the battery was open on the rear, we ſhould have gone round to attack it on that ſide, and thus have avoided a heavy cannonade, which did much execution on our right wing. What can you think of a man who would not part with a farthing to ſave the lives of his ſoldiers, or promote his own reputation?

Here an object preſented itſelf which could give but little encouragement to troops already ſo much haraſſed as we were. This was a mountain of more than three miles perpendicular height, in many places ſtrongly fortified, and which lay directly in our route to the rich capital of Hyder Nagur. There are two paſſes in the mountains, which lead to the province

of

of Bedanore; that of Hyder Gur, which we made choice of, is the moſt difficult and the beſt fortified of the two, but is practicable to cannon, which the other is not. The works which defend this defile are all open on the rear, but being covered by impenetrable woods, the uſual retreat of tigers and other wild beaſts, are inacceſſible on that ſide; they cannot therefore be taken but by eſcalade, which muſt be attempted in the very face of cannon, muſquets, and every other ſort of weapon. The General, indeed, conſidered the enterpriſe as not feaſible; but, through the encouraging advice of Macleod and Humberſtone, was induced to give it a trial.

Colonel Macleod, with the forty-ſecond regiment and a few other troops, was to croſs the mountain by a path known only to a few of the country people, and then come round on the rear of the batteries; while the Europeans of Bombay, with a few Sepoy battalions,

ſhould attack them in front. But Macleod's detachment, upon which we imagined the fate of the whole to depend, loſt their way; and, unable to find any outlet, returned to the place whence they had ſet out, after a moſt toilſome and fatiguing march. The Bombay troops, who were originally intended only to make a diverſion, and take up the attention of the enemy, while the forty-ſecond regiment ſhould be doing all the execution, reached the top of the mountain in a very ſhort time, eſcalading and taking all the forts they met with in their way. Their ſucceſs, indeed, was ſo extraordinary that we could hardly credit it: we however traced the courſe they had marked out to us, full of admiration at their courage, and conſidering them as beings of a ſuperior order. Thoſe, on the other hand, who had ſo ill defended theſe ſtrong poſts, appeared to us unworthy of the name of men; for it was our unanimous opinion,

that

that a hundred good ſoldiers would have been able, in theſe paſſes, to withſtand the combined force of all Europe.

On the twenty-ſeventh we reached the top of the mountain. Soon afterward Captain Campbell of the Company's army, who had been ſhipwrecked on board a man of war near Mangalore, and had ſince been kept priſoner at Nagur, came to us with terms of accommodation from Hyab Saib, Governor of the province. The terms of this capitulation have never tranſpired; but it is well known that the principal condition was, that General Mathews ſhould uſe his intereſt that Hyab Saib might continue Governor of the province under the Company, and retain the ſame powers, emoluments, and privileges, as he had enjoyed under Hyder Ally. The offers made to us were accepted with pleaſure. It was, in fact, a pleaſant circumſtance to poſſeſs ourſelves ſo eaſily of a place, in which we could hardly

have hoped to penetrate by force of arms. But it was not long before the General violated the conditions of the treaty in the moſt ſhameful manner. The next day we ſet out for Nagur, which is about ten miles from Hyder Gur, and forty to the north-eaſt of Condapore. We had no ſooner reached this place than the General went into the Fort, where he was received by Hyab Saib with proteſtations of great friendſhip; and they appeared for ſome time to repoſe mutual confidence in each other. The Governor ſhewed all the riches of the publick treaſury to the General; who, overjoyed at the ſight, carried ſeveral officers to ſee them, acknowledging they were the property of the army: but he had no ſooner recovered from the delirium of joy, into which he had been thrown, than he began to conſider that he had now an opportunity of rendering himſelf the richeſt ſubject of Great-Britain, by appropriating this immenſe wealth

wealth to his own uſe. He had, however, gone too far by the declaration he had made before the officers, and we were too well acquainted with our rights, for him to ſucceed in his ungenerous deſign. To obviate, however, the effects of this overſight, he deſired Hyab Saib to claim all the treaſure as his own private property; ſecretly intending to extort it from him afterwards, in the ſhape of a *preſent*. The Governor, who *at firſt* was not aware of theſe private views, very readily gave in to a propoſal that was to make him maſter of immenſe riches; but he no ſooner found that he was only to be a blind to the General's injuſtice in depriving us of our plunder, than he publickly declared that he had no pretenſions whatever to it. Upon this the General, irritated at the diſappointment, made him undergo the moſt contemptuous treatment; and, that he might feel the full weight of his power, impriſoned him in one of the

houſes of the Fort, under a guard who had orders to ſuffer no perſon to have acceſs to him. Thus did he treat a man, who, if he had been uſed becomingly, and according to the conditions of the treaty, might have been the means of keeping this rich province under the Engliſh Government, and of preſerving us from the humiliating reverſe of fortune which we ſoon after experienced.

It is but natural to ſuppoſe that the army did not long remain ſilent; there was ſomething too mortifying in being thus tricked out of a treaſure ſufficient to give a decent competency to every individual on that ſervice. Memorials poured in upon the General from every quarter: the firſt were couched in the moſt reſpectful terms; but, proving ineffectual, were followed by menacing remonſtrances. The General, who now found that it was neceſſary to do ſomething to appeaſe the ill-humour of the army,

army, informed them that Hyab Saib had made them a preſent of forty thouſand pounds. We had conceived that the ſhare of every field officer would at leaſt amount to this ſum, and therefore received the propoſition with great contempt. But, in ſpite of every thing we could ſay or do, he was never prevailed upon any further.

Locked up in his apartment, and conſtantly gazing on the numberleſs bags of gold and ſilver with which he was ſurrounded, the General appeared to have loſt the uſe of his reaſon. For at this very time, when the officers were juſtly irritated at his unhandſome conduct, he made an attempt to deprive the ſoldiers of the uſual quantity of proviſions allowed by the Company to troops in the field. Theſe men, who were ſenſible that they had conſtantly done their duty, in ſpite of the great hardſhips, the forced marches, and all the other evils they had ſuffered during the campaign, particularly in the

expedition againſt Palicochery, uttered aloud their expreſſions of reſentment at this uſage. They complained bitterly at the unreaſonable return made to their faithful ſervices; and without the interference of the officers, who exerted themſelves on this occaſion, ſome fatal event muſt have followed. The commanding officers of regiments made the moſt ſerious repreſentations to the General of the cruelty of depriving the troops of the proviſions due to them, and preſſed him warmly not to perſiſt in ſo unjuſt and impolitic a reſolution. He at laſt condeſcended to acquieſce in their opinions; and the ſoldiers had permiſſion to draw the allowances granted by the Company.

You ſee how men are blinded by avarice. If Macleod and Humberſtone had left the General to his rapacity, when he conceived the deſign of retrenching the proviſions of the army for his own benefit, to what extremes would not ſoldiers have been compelled, to avoid periſhing

riſhing for want? What opinion would the inhabitants have formed of us when, inſtead of acts of protection and friendſhip, they ſhould experience at our hands nothing but violence and rapine? To what deſperate attempts might they not have been incited, when they ſhould have beheld their fields laid waſte, and their houſes in flames? Theſe were the unavoidable conſequences of driving the ſoldiers to the laſt extremity. What would the neighbouring people have thought, when they ſhould have been informed that ſuch was our treatment of our allies? Every variety of human miſery, hunger, fatigue, nay death itſelf, muſt have appeared to them preferable to any connection with ſuch monſters.

Quid non mortalia pectora cogis
Auri ſacra fames! HOR.

Though the prudence of the Colonels ſaved the General's honour on the preſent

ſent occaſion, this paſſion for money was productive of the greateſt evils to him, the melancholy effects of which you will ſoon be made acquainted with.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Nagur, April 12, 1783.

To re-eſtabliſh harmony it was not only neceſſary to give the ſoldiers their allowance of proviſions, but that the General ſhould pledge his word that the money found in the treaſury of Nagur ſhould be fairly divided; ſo that every man might receive the dividend he was entitled to. This both Macleod and Humberſtone endeavoured to perſuade him to do: but it was an eaſier taſk to tear the vitals out of his body than to extort from him any engagement of this kind. They ſolicited—they preſſed—but all in vain. However, to leave untried no means of averting the ſtorm that was ready to burſt over our heads, they wrote a letter, in which they warned him of all the evils he had reaſon to expect; and their predictions proved by the event

event to be but too well founded. The General paid no more attention to this letter than to the advice and remonſtrances that had preceded it—he even affected to treat the writers with more haughtineſs and diſregard than he did before. This determined them to go to Bombay, that they might lay his conduct before the Council, and uſe their beſt endeavours to ſave the army from the inevitable ruin that hung over it.

The repreſentations of theſe Gentlemen at Bombay were as ſucceſsful as they had reaſon to expect; for Mathews was diſgraced; Macleod appointed to the chief command, and Humberſtone to the ſecond. The conduct of the Council was wiſe; but of what avail is the wiſdom of man, but to confound his vanity, and ſhew him the inevitable neceſſity to which he is ſubject? Our two new Commanders embarked in a country boat to join the army and take poſſeſſion of their appointments, but a Maratta pirate, whom they met with

on the paſſage, confounded all their projects. If, inſtead of being carried away by a falſe point of honour, they had quietly ſurrendered, they would, upon the ſlighteſt application of the Council, have been ſet at liberty, and no other evil conſequence would have followed but a little delay: inſtead of this they yielded to the firſt impulſe of their natural courage, and oppoſed a boat ſtrongly manned by a crew of armed banditti. In the heat of the fight Humberſtone and Major Shaw, who had unluckily for himſelf embarked with them, were both killed: Macleod and almoſt all the ſailors, after receiving deſperate wounds, fell into the hands of the pirate.

I have ſaid in a former letter that Humberſtone wanted nothing but experience to render him one of the ableſt Generals of the age, and every thing I have ſince ſeen of him confirms me in that opinion. I am aware that he was guilty

guilty of overſights at the beginning of the campaign: but great men turn every failure to their improvement, and no one could take leſſons in this ſchool with greater advantage than Humberſtone. In ſeveral tranſactions with the country powers he diſplayed a very uncommon ſhare of ſagacity and penetration; and the letters he wrote to Government ſhewed him to be a conſummate politician, and a perfect maſter of the true intereſts of the nation: they contain the beſt things that have been ſaid upon that topic, and appear, in every line, to have been dictated by a capacious mind, which arranges, inveſtigates, and places all the arguments on the ſubject in the beſt and cleareſt point of view. Major Shaw had not had the ſame opportunities of diſplaying his merit, but the manner in which he acquitted himſelf on the coaſt of Coromandel, gives ſufficient ground to ſay that he was a brave and intelligent officer. In this age men of merit are extremely

extremely rare, and our ſituation was ſuch, that nothing but extraordinary judgment could preſerve us from the moſt diſgraceful calamities: judge then how great a loſs we ſuſtained by the death of theſe Gentlemen.

A few days after the departure of Macleod and Humberſtone, the King's troops, accompanied by a detachment of Sepoys, marched into the country. They were preceded by deputies to command, in the name of Hyab Saib, the ſurrender of Anampore; but the Governor of this place, in defiance of the laws of war and nations, made them priſoners and loaded them with irons: other deputies who followed were treated with the ſame inhumanity; ſo that nothing remained for us but to reduce the Fort by violence, and revenge the indignity we had ſuffered in the perſons of our deputies. We erected a battery and threw a bridge over the ditch. On the fifteenth we ſtormed the place, and took it after a

ſlight

ſlight reſiſtance from the beſieged, with the loſs of very few of our own men.

Political reaſons, as well as the expediency of revenging the unworthy treatment experienced by our deputies, determined us to put the whole garriſon to the ſword. Severity, and even barbarity, towards men ſo daſtardly as the Indians, is always productive of good effects. I have myſelf a great averſion to cruelty, and cannot behold the ſhedding of human blood without horror; but I am well convinced that a little ſeverity on proper occaſions is the ſureſt means of preventing eventually a great loſs of lives. When one garriſon has been treated like that of Anampore, the next opens its gates as ſoon as you appear; you enter peaceably, and the laws of humanity are obſerved. Sentiments of honour are unknown in this country; obedience muſt always be *compelled*: hence it is that on military ſervice in India, the feelings of compaſſion, and the

the calls of duty, are in frequent oppoſition to each other; but the latter, you muſt allow, ſuperſede every other conſidreation: we are reſponſible to our King and to our country for the lives committed to our charge.

Our conduct to the ſofter ſex is perhaps not quite ſo juſtifiable. By immemorial preſcription in the Eaſt, the women are the property of the conqueror, and this barbarous uſage, which Chriſtianity has baniſhed from Europe, prevailed among all the nations of antiquity. Our ſoldiers, the ſlaves of ſenſual paſſions, and whoſe eagerneſs for enjoyment increaſes with their danger, very readily adopt a cuſtom ſo agreeable to their inclinations, and authoriſed by the practice of the inhabitants.

In the violence and confuſion of a ſtorm it often happens that youth and beauty, educated in all the ſoftneſs and modeſty of their ſex, are torn from the arms of their parents to ſatisfy the

brutal deſires of a ſoldier. I ſhudder at the recollection of the innocent victims, who, unable to bear the loſs of their honour, or the being reduced to the condition of ſlaves, I have ſeen plunge a dagger into their boſoms, or throw themſelves headlong down a precipice. 'What admirable women,' will you ſay, 'and how unlike thoſe of our country! Have we ever heard of ſuch prodigies of chaſtity among our ſoft and tender Europeans? Theſe Indians are certainly not the daughters of her who ate the forbidden fruit! How happy are the men who poſſeſs ſuch Lucretias! Secure of being the fathers of their children their paternal affection muſt be of a more exalted kind! They are free from thoſe anxieties, thoſe dreams of cuckoldom which frequently deſtroy the peace of many European huſbands! The fatal ſiſters have ſpun all their days of gold and of ſilk! Curſed apple, thy pernicious juice has poiſoned all the

happineſs of *our* lives, and imbittered even our moſt lawful gratifications.'

It is thus that lovers of ſyſtems or of the marvellous are apt to ſpeak. But I, who wiſh to keep the beaten track of received opinions, as long as no ſound argument appears againſt them, will aſſure you, that there is nothing in this account ſupernatural, or which even requires a ſtretch of faith. In fact, the beauties of this country are not more diſpoſed to cruelty than thoſe of Europe: their huſbands are ſo well convinced of this truth that they have Argus's to watch them night and day. Bolts, bars, and lofty towers, are, however, not always effectual; the lover, like Jupiter of old, deſcends in a ſhower of gold, which blinds the attendants, breaks through all obſtacles, and bears him to the ſecret apartment of his miſtreſs. But why then do the women deſtroy themſelves in the manner I have deſcribed? Becauſe, according to eſtabliſh-

ed laws, they forfeit their liberty, and are expoſed to public ſale, like the cattle in our markets, as ſoon as they are known to have had any intercourſe with perſons not of their own caſt. It is not at all ſurpriſing that women, accuſtomed to all the comforts and enjoyments of an eaſy life, ſhould prefer death to ſlavery. Beſides, the Indians have notions of ſuicide very different from ours. They do not think that eternal torments await the wretch who has committed the crime of ridding himſelf of a burthenſome exiſtence: on the contrary, they conſider the action as honourable; they eaſe themſelves of a load become intolerable, to fly to the ſoul of the univerſe, from whom they have been in a ſtate of ſeparation, remaining with that great principle till they are appointed to animate a new body. You will no longer wonder that women ſhould be found in this country who prefer death to infamy and ſlavery. And I am thoroughly convinced

that

that there are many females in Europe, who, actuated by the ſame motives, would adopt a ſimilar conduct. Human nature is the ſame every where, though it appears in various characters, according to the difference of place, prejudice, and cuſtom. Though extenſive views of policy and of humanity have ſometimes required that a garriſon ſhould be put to the ſword, we have never embrued our hands in the blood of women and children: we have even ſo far reſpected the laws of humanity that all the wounded, who ſurvive the ſtorm of a town, are treated with the greateſt tenderneſs; their wounds are dreſſed by our ſurgeons, and the ſame care is taken of them as of our own people. They are afterwards conſidered as friends, and are left at liberty to go wherever they pleaſe.

You muſt not imagine that we all give the rein to licentious deſires as ſoon as the reſtraint of law is removed; a

fact of which I was myself an eye witness, is a striking proof that there are those among us who are capable of resisting the strongest temptations. Soon after the storm of Anampore, when the troops breathed nothing but the spirit of slaughter and destruction, and the violation of chastity was frequent, the black servants of an officer, nearly of my own age, asked him whether he chose a girl. This word, in the language of the country, very much resembles that which signifies an ox, and the young man, supposing that it was an animal of this kind that was spoken of, answered, that he had no objection. He was then led into a house, where his ears were immediately assailed with the lamentable and confused cries of men, women, and children. Hurrying to the place whence the noise proceeded, he beheld, to his great astonishment, his servants attempting to force away a young female who had fainted, while her father, mother, brothers,

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and ſiſters, were uſing their utmoſt efforts to reſcue her from death or infamy. He immediately ſet her at liberty; and, totally occupied with contemplating her beauty, which was the moſt perfect he had ever beheld, he did not obſerve that the whole family were proſtrate on the ground imploring his protection, and bedewing his feet with their tears. As ſoon as he had recovered from his amazement, he raiſed them from that humiliating poſture, and though he felt conſiderable pain in ſeparating himſelf from an object which had made ſo lively an impreſſion on his heart, honour triumphed over love, and he conducted the young lady and her relations into the country, till they had reached a place of ſecurity.

I hope, my dear friend, we ſhall in future find you leſs liberal of your ſarcaſms againſt the moderns; for you ſee that Cyrus, Alexander, and Scipio, are not the only warriors that have been

able to conquer their paſſions. You muſt acknowledge that honourable and virtuous ſentiments are found among all ranks, profeſſions, and ages, and that the condition of a ſoldier does not (univerſally at leaſt) corrupt the heart. About the time that we left Nagur, the General detached a battalion of Sepoys to demand, in the name of Hyab Saib, the poſſeſſion of Mangalore, which is ſituated on the ſea ſhore, and is the ſtrongeſt fortreſs of the country. The commanding officer, who was not prepared to ſtand a ſiege, amuſed the General and his deputies for ſome time with great addreſs. But when he had made the neceſſary preparations, he ſent a meſſenger, deſiring in civil terms that we would remove our camp. As ſoon as the General was appriſed of this circumſtance, which plainly ſhewed the intentions of the Governor, he left Nagur with all the troops that could be ſpared, and began a regular ſiege of Mangalore.

Mangalore. We were obliged to wait a few days for artillery and ammunition, which were to come by ſea from Candapore. On their arrival we immediately erected a battery and begun the attack. In leſs than one day we made a conſiderable breach in the wall: but the reduction of the place would have coſt us much time if we had met with reſiſtance; but the Garriſon, fearful of the fate of that of Anampore, refuſed to ſtand an aſſault, and obliged the Governor to capitulate.

The capture of this fortreſs made us maſters of a country not much leſs extenſive than England; and, I believe, in point of fertility, ſuperior to any other part of India.

Sanders wood, which is only produced in the provinces of the Bedanore country, would alone be an object of conſiderable value in our hands. The natives extract an oil from it, with which the great men anoint their bodies; and thoſe of the

Gentoos

Gentoos who can afford ſuch an expence, burn it in their funeral piles. If a monopoly of it could be obtained, we ought to export it to China, where it is in great requeſt. The Chineſe conſume large quantities of this fragrant wood. It is diſtilled for its oil, or made into furniture, or finally burnt for its agreeable perfume in apartments where there are the bodies of dead perſons.

Agriculture is not neglected; the lowlands, highly cultivated, ſupply the inland parts of the country with all the rice they conſume, beſides furniſhing a conſiderable ſurplus for exportation. The rice produced in the vicinity of Mangalore is eſteemed equal, if not ſuperior, to that which is found in any other part of India.

The political axiom, that population flouriſhes with agriculture, ſeems here to be proved by the number of inhabitants, whoſe healthy and plump appearance declares the fertility of the ſoil

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on which they live. They are of a moderate ſtature, but ſtout and well proportioned.

The women are ſuch as I have already deſcribed in my former letters, except that they are not quite of ſo dark a complexion.

The roads lately made by Hyder Ally are of conſiderable breadth, and equal in every reſpect to any we have in England.

The towns of this country are the moſt regular and the beſt built I have ſeen in India. Hyder Nagur is about ten miles in circumference; the ſtreets are broad, and the houſes have nothing in their appearance which announces that poverty within, ſo univerſally conſpicuous in the other dominions of Tippoo. You muſt not, however, imagine that the houſes are three or four ſtories high, or elegantly ſaſhed, like thoſe of London and other cities of Europe. They are all of a ſingle

ſtory,

ſtory, and in general have a ſky-light, or admit light from the door. The natives are not unacquainted with glaſs, but in their opinion a wiſe man, who wiſhes to be ſheltered from injury, ſhould renounce the uſe of it. Windows like ours (I ſpeak the language of the Indians) are a conſtant incitement to vice. A woman, ſhut up within-doors, ſees a young man with whoſe appearance ſhe is pleaſed; a ſecond ſight adds to the firſt impreſſion; and if the favourite obſerves it, and takes any ſteps to turn it to his advantage, the lady's honour is irretrievably gone; for, if her gallant cannot get admiſſion into the houſe, a rendezvous is appointed; and it is natural enough to ſuppoſe that when two perſons of different ſexes and equal deſires are alone, the honour of the poor huſband does not eſcape ſome little injury. For in theſe climates, where the blood boils in the veins, continence is a virtue of conſiderable magnitude;

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at leaſt the married men think ſo. The conſciouſneſs perhaps of their own debility may give them many groundleſs apprehenſions of the fidelity of their wives. The Miniſters who impoſed a tax on the windows in England would appear to them very ſenſible perſons. And if our Engliſhmen, who are ſome of them as jealous as the Indians, were to conſider their own intereſt, inſtead of murmuring, they would never ceaſe addreſſing the Houſe of Commons, till that grave aſſembly ſhould double, nay treble, ſo wiſe and ſalutary an impoſt. This would be the ſure method of bringing about the diſuſe of that wicked invention, a window, which is only calculated to gratify women of certain principles, and vain and foppiſh men.

Impartial juſtice was regularly adminiſtered throughout the government of Hyab Saib. The inhabitants lived in peace and harmony with each other,

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and hardly any kind of crime had been heard of among them for a long time. One of them, who had been robbed of an ox, applied to the commanding officer of the Engliſh troops for his aſſiſtance in the recovery of it. Search having been made throughout the army without ſucceſs, he was adviſed to ſee whether his neighbours had not ſtolen it. 'My neighbours!' cried he with aſtoniſhment, 'that is impoſſible; for we had no thieves in the country till you came.'

Hyab Saib boaſted that there was not a government in all India where ſo few acts of violence were committed, or where the inhabitants enjoyed ſuch perfect tranquillity. 'It is true,' added he, 'I have taken great pains: I was obliged to over-awe them by the dread of ſevere puniſhments. A hundred thouſand men were hung in leſs than ten years; but nothing muſt

muſt be left undone, when the publick peace is at ſtake.' This is of a piece with the practice of thoſe ſavages who cut down a tree to gather its fruit.

LETTER XIII.

Madras, June 2, 1783.

HITHERTO we have been ſucceſsful, and victory has conſtantly attended our arms; but you will find that the ſcene of our proſperity is about to change.

Towards the end of the month of March 1783, we received intelligence that a numerous army was on the point of attacking us, in order to recover the country which we had reduced with ſo little trouble. The General, though maſter of inexhauſtible treaſures, was ſo niggardly in his rewards to thoſe whom he employed to gain information, that his intelligence was always falſe, incomplete, or too late. The enemy was within thirty miles of Nagur before he knew their force, the name of the commanding

manding officer, or whether they were accompanied by any French troops.

As ſoon as the General found himſelf in danger of immediate invaſion, he divided the army into detachments, which he ſent into the different mud-forts we had taken. Theſe are nothing more than little works of earth, but of aſtoniſhing hardneſs and ſolidity. Moſt of the Indian houſes are built in the ſame manner. The Romans were not unacquainted with this method of conſtructing buildings; and it is at this day perfectly underſtood in ſome provinces of France. The whole art conſiſts in tempering the earth well with water, in making uſe of it at the proper point of humidity, and in beating it hard together with a wooden rammer. I have ſeen walls made of earth in India which would turn a cannon-ball, and required ſeveral diſcharges of our artillery, before a breach was made. Houſes built of earth are always dry; you

never ſee any moiſture dripping down their walls, which is frequently the caſe with thoſe of mortar and ſtone.

If, after the capture of Bedanore, the General had applied himſelf to the fortifying of the town, and had kept his army together, Tippoo would have found it difficult to have given us any uneaſineſs. This conduct, though not the moſt prudent that might have been thought of, was nevertheleſs infinitely preferable to that which we adopted. But, if it was reſolved that we ſhould remain in the country, he might have poſted himſelf in the paſs, and, with the aſſiſtance of Hyab Saib, have rendered it unaſſailable; this, by the by, was the only plan conſiſtent with wiſdom, which in his ſituation he could have followed. But the love of money had taken ſuch entire poſſeſſion of his mind, that the little talents he had received from Nature had not room to act; and he neglected the moſt neceſſary

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and obvious precautions. As he had determined to keep poſſeſſion of Nagur, he ought to have given orders to the officers on detachment to evacuate the different Forts as faſt as the enemy ſhould advance, and join the main body of the army; by thus collecting the ſcattered troops the garriſon of Nagur would have been conſiderably augmented, and in condition to repel the attack of the invaders. But ſo far was he from having any foreſight of this kind, that the very day before we were beſieged he ſent a detachment with proviſions for ſome of the out-poſts;—all the men that compoſed it fell into the hands of the enemy, and we never ſaw them more! Parts of the 98th, 100th, and 101ſt regiments, amounting in all to ſix hundred Europeans, with one thouſand Sepoys, was the whole force that remained under his own command.

With this inadequate garriſon did Mathews undertake the defence of Nagur.

This town is ſurrounded, at the diſtance of four miles, by a broad ditch that forms a circle thirty miles in circumference, and would require thirty or forty thouſand men for its defence. The General, however, notwithſtanding the weakneſs of his numbers, ſent a detachment to diſpute the paſſage of it againſt an army of two thouſand French, and a hundred thouſand Indians.

On the ſixth of April the General received intelligence that the enemy had paſſed the ditch at a place which was not defended, and that they were advancing towards the town. On this news he immediately called in the party he had detached againſt them, excepting fifty Sepoys, whom he poſted on the lines, with orders to defend them to the laſt extremity; however, they very prudently retreated next day as ſoon as they deſcried Tippoo's army.

On the ſeventh the enemy prepared to attack the town. The General poſted his

his army to defend it on every ſide, and diſpatched a Captain with fifty Europeans, without either ſpare ammunition or proviſions, to a tower that was at a ſhort diſtance; but their retreat was cut off, and they were obliged to capitulate. The enemy had now penetrated into all the different quarters of the town; and, as we were divided into ſmall parties, we were attacked on every ſide, and obliged to a precipitate retreat. The ſtreets were without any barricade, ſo that our only ſhelter was the walls of the fort, whither every one hurried as faſt as he was able.

Tippoo's troops had taken poſſeſſion of an eminence that commanded the Fort, and we ſent ſome hundred Europeans to diſlodge them. But though our party ſucceeded without much loſs, they were unable to keep the poſt from the impracticability of maintaining a communication with the garriſon. In four or five hours the enemy had

made themſelves maſters of all the avenues of the town; and Major Futtrell, the only field-officer of the detachment, and who was entruſted with the defence of it, conducted himſelf in ſo ſhameful a manner, that he deſerved to have been put immediately in arreſt. The General was informed of every particular of this diſgraceful behaviour, but ſuch was his blind partiality to the man, that he gave him another command on which in a great meaſure depended the ſalvation or ruin of the garriſon. The French, puffed up with confidence at ſo ſucceſsful a beginning, and not ſuſpecting that we would riſk a ſally after ſo many rebuffs, had put off their accoutrements, and careleſsly laid their arms on the ground. They were dreſſing and eating their food with perfect unconcern, and without a guard or ſingle piece of artillery on their front. The General took notice of this want of vigilance, and, without loſing a moment, ordered a ſubal-

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ten's guard to ruſh upon them, and ſeize a field-piece that was with one of the French regiments; this little coup demain was completely ſucceſsful, and we carried off the cannon. Major Futtrell had followed to ſupport them with the two companies of the 102d regiment; as this reinforcement, which marched up briſkly with fixed bayonets, greatly increaſed the confuſion of the French, Monſ. De Coſſigney, their commanding officer, deeply affected at the imminent danger which threatened them, gave an inſtance of uncommon and admirable preſence of mind; he diſpatched his Major of Brigade to intreat we would ſpare the lives of his ſoldiers, who were ready to ſurrender themſelves priſoners of war. After this requeſt had been granted, the officer added that his orders were not to treat DEFINITIVELY, but with the General IN PERSON. It was in vain to ſhew the Major that this was only a fineſſe to gain time, and that men who

might betake themſelves to flight, could have no ſerious intention of laying down their arms; he obſtinately ſhut his eyes againſt all repreſentation; and, halting at thirty paces from the French, ſent for the General, and waited till he came up.

In the mean while the French had taken up their arms and accoutrements, and, by the time the General arrived, were ready to ſtand on their defence. He directed the officer who had come from the French troops to tell Monſ. De Coſſigney to order his men to ground their arms; but the officer, inſtead of executing his directions, told him with a ſmile, that they had not come ſo far to ſurrender themſelves without any reaſon; that if they had had any ſuch inclination they might have gratified it on the coaſt of Coromandel; and that, finally, it was the *Engliſh* who were to conſider themſelves as priſoners. The General, a little piqued at having been ſent for only to be derided, put the

officer

officer in irons, and ordered a heavy piece of artillery to be fired upon the French, who anſwered by a general diſcharge of their muſquetry, which killed or wounded all the officers of the detachment except Major Futtrell. This GALLANT and EXPERT officer then ordered his men to fall back, to open to the right and left, and, with their backs to the wall, begin an oblique fire on the enemy. He could not have contrived a happier expedient to make his ſoldiers kill each other; and, if that was his intention, I believe it was pretty well executed. However, as this croſs fire did not anſwer another purpoſe which he perhaps had in view, he ordered a retreat. This manœuvre was conducted by our noble Major with ſo much judgment, that he did not loſe a ſingle man: the reaſon commonly aſſigned for this his extraordinary ſucceſs is, that the Engliſh fled ſo faſt that the ſhot could not catch them.

Such

Such was the laſt exploit of this memorable day. But from this moment the General appeared to be a new man. Inſtead of the haughty and imperious demeanour, which he always aſſumed when he converſed on military duty, he adopted the moſt gentle and affable manners: during the whole of the ſiege he maintained, even in ſituations of the greateſt danger, a coolneſs and ſteadineſs of conduct, which gained him the eſteem and reſpect of the whole army. We almoſt forgot that to the repeated imprudence and blunders of this man we owed the extremity to which we were reduced. From this time I do not think that a ſingle error can be laid to his charge, excepting the having continued to place his confidence in Futtrell, and giving him the command of certain operations during the ſiege, which all failed of ſucceſs.

On the eighth the town took fire, and all the moſt conſiderable buildings were

were reduced to aſhes. The flames communicated to our magazine of proviſions, of which the greater part was deſtroyed in ſpite of all our exertions to ſave them. We had kept poſſeſſion of a ſmall poſt at ſome diſtance from the Fort; but our people, unable to hold it out any longer, on the fourteenth it was evacuated, and they took refuge as ſoon as they could in the Fort. In the mean time the enemy had employed themſelves in erecting batteries all around us; a conſiderable number of them were already finiſhed; and the principal one, which conſiſted of ſixteen guns, was within two hundred yards of our walls. On the ſeventeenth all their works were complete, and they began a moſt dreadful cannonade which diſmounted moſt of our artillery, and killed and wounded a great many men. The Fort is ſo unfortunately ſituated that one cannot move in it without being expoſed to the fire of the enemy. There were houſes

houſes within fifty yards of the Fort in which markſmen were poſted to watch and fire at us individually: guns were kept loaded on the batteries with the ſame deſign; ſo that if a ſoldier did but ſhew his head, it was more than probable that he would be killed by the ſhowers of muſquet-balls and grape-ſhot that poured upon him. As we could not venture to appear in the day-time, our operations were confined to the night, during which we made frequent ſallies; we ſurpriſed ſeveral houſes full of men, whom we diſpatched immediately, and without ſuffering ourſelves any conſiderable loſs.

On the night of the twenty-fourth we ſtormed a battery which had been recently erected within fifty paces of the Fort; our men marched up with unloaded arms, but with fixed bayonets, and killed almoſt every one they found: but the ſucceſs was incomplete; for this ſally was made before the enemy had

had brought any guns to the battery.

But in ſpite of all our efforts our ruin was evidently approaching; the number of our dead and wounded increaſed every day; the walls of the Fort were almoſt battered to pieces; we had no hope of any ſuccour; and there ſeemed no poſſibility of holding out much longer.

We were without any reſource, and the number of our killed and wounded exceeded five hundred. At this criſis the General called a council of war, in which he repreſented the circumſtances of our ſituation; that we were without ammunition; that we had proviſions only for fifteen days; and that, even if we had a ſufficiency of both thoſe articles, the want of an hoſpital for the ſick, and of ſome ſhelter againſt the approaching rainy ſeaſon, would put us under the neceſſity of capitulating. The members of the council agreed with him in opinion, and ſome officers of diſtinction

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were ſent with articles of capitulation to the Nabob, who was at firſt haughty and imperious; but at length was brought to conſent that the garriſon ſhould march out with the honours of war, drums beating and colours flying; that we ſhould pile our arms on the Glacis, and then depart, with each of us the whole of his private property, for Sadachagur, where we ſhould take the firſt opportunity of embarking for Bombay. The General was allowed a guard of a hundred Sepoys with their arms and thirty-ſix rounds of powder and ball. The whole of the publick treaſure was to be left in the Fort.

On the twenty-fourth we quitted Nagur; but we had hardly marched a mile before we were ſurrounded by troops, who ordered us to halt.

Avarice, the ſource of all our preceding evils, was yet to fill up the meaſure of our misfortunes. Notwithſtanding we were at the mercy of ene-

mies,

mies, who were abſolute maſters of our fate, the General was ſo much a ſlave to his unfortunate appetite for money, that he broke an expreſs article of the capitulation rather than to leave behind him the wealth for which he had already committed ſo many meanneſſes. He had carried away all the publick money; and to palliate, as he thought, this crime againſt the laws of nations, he diſtributed a ſmall ſhare of it among the troops, committing the remainder to the care of ſeveral officers, who were to carry it for him concealed among their baggage.

On the twenty-ninth the Nabob ſent for the General; and we have never heard of him afterwards. On the following day the officers commanding the different corps were put in confinement.

On the firſt of May the Nabob ſent a caſhier into our camp, before whom we were brought one by one. We were ſtripped and ſearched in the moſt inde-

cent manner, and our money, as well as every thing elſe we had in the world, were taken from us. No reſpect was paid to the modeſty of the women; the black ſoldiers cut their clothes from their bodies, and, after offering them the greateſt indignities, expoſed them ſtark naked to thouſands of ſpectators. Neither tears, nor lamentations had any effect on the iron hearts of theſe monſters, or at all reſtrained them from indulging in the moſt cruel and violent exceſſes.

After this dreadful buſineſs we were ſent to the town, where they confined us in a ſtable. We ſubſiſted on rice and water, and an allowance of two picas (about two or three pence) *per diem*. Monſ. Querenſtret, a French officer, who had been our priſoner, came very often to viſit us during our melancholy confinement, and brought us preſents of proviſions and vegetables. He had the generoſity to offer money to ſeveral of

us,

us, though there was no chance of his ever being reimburſed. Our miſerable ſituation affected him ſo much that he engaged to carry a letter from us to Monſ. De Coſſigney, and to exert all his intereſt with that gentleman in our favour. But we were ſo narrowly watched that it coſt us great pains to ſlip a letter unobſerved into his pocket. This letter contained a faithful picture of our condition: we repreſented the ill health we ſuffered from living in a manner ſo unuſual to us; and the danger all our wounded were expoſed to from want of proper diet, care, and attendance: we concluded by entreating him to make uſe of his intereſt with the Nabob to obtain ſome alleviation of the rigour of our confinement, and ſuch treatment as his Britannick Majeſty's ſubjects had a right to expect: finally, that our ſurgeons might be allowed to attend the ſick, and be put in poſſeſſion of their inſtruments which had been taken from

them. The letter was faithfully delivered, but we received no anſwer, which appeared to us at that time very extraordinary. We have ſince learned that Monſ. De Coſſigney apologiſed for it to Major Campbell at Mangalore; telling him that he had felt for our ſituation even before the receipt of our letter; that Tippoo had always turned a deaf ear to every propoſition which appeared to favour us, and that an anſwer from him might have excited ſuſpicion.

What a humiliating ſituation for a man of ſuch a character, and ſuch ſentiments, as Monſ. De Coſſigney! But you have here a true picture of the Indian government. The Sovereign commands with abſolute deſpotiſm; the ſubjects obey with abject ſubmiſſion. The moſt inſignificant action, if it does not agree with the caprice of the tyrant, is conſidered as a crime of the blackeſt die, and is puniſhed by a painful death. In Europe there is no tameneſs of character

that

that would not be rouſed by ſuch exceſſive rigour; every one would abandon the tyrant, and leave his pretended rights to be maintained, and his injuries to be revenged by himſelf. In India theſe ſentiments are not felt, and the people have been taught from their infancy to conſider a Nabob as a being of a ſuperior order.

On the ninth we were taken out of the ſtable, where we had been confined; we were without clothes, and fettered in pairs, like felons guilty of ſome atrocious crime. Thus equipped we travelled above a hundred and fifty miles in twelve days. We uſually began our march in the heat of the day, not taking any reſt till night-fall, or till ſome of us were thrown into a delirium by exceſſive heat and fatigue: our miſeries, however, did not ſoften the hearts of our barbarous conductors; and they would frequently, in ſpite of the exhauſted condition in which they ſaw us, compel us to pro-

ceed. They uſed to mount the weakeſt on bullocks, obliging the reſt to follow on foot. If through exceſs of fatigue and ſufferance any one gave vent to complaints, he received no other comfort than ſevere blows with a ſtick or a firelock. One day an officer was ſeized with a violent cramp; after the arm of his fellow-priſoner had been almoſt broke by the convulſive efforts of the ſick man, the iron fetter which held them together gave way; and though ſeveral of our guards were preſent, and ſaw that the accident was occaſioned by the powerful contraction of the muſcles incident to that diſeaſe, it was laid to the charge of intention; and it was not without great difficulty that we perſuaded our drivers from inflicting corporal puniſhment on a man who was evidently on the verge of the grave.

Many of our party, unable to endure the hardſhips we ſuffered, fell down motionleſs, and expired in their fetters, without

without receiving the leaſt aſſiſtance. It would require a volume to give the detail of what we ſuffered from our guards; but I do not think that any thing I could ſay of their cruelty and barbarity would throw new light on their national character, of which my former letters muſt have given you a ſufficient notion. But we had great pleaſure in obſerving that the inhabitants of the different towns through which we paſſed, were ſo far from triumphing over us, that they were moved with compaſſion at our misfortunes. The juſtice, moderation, and generoſity of our conduct to the country we had reduced, ſo different from that uſually adopted by the Indian conquerors, had reached their ears, and gained their eſteem, if not their veneration. They conſidered us as beings of a nature ſuperior to that of other men; and they were heard to declare, as we paſſed through the ſtreets, that it was ſhameful to offer ſuch treatment in re-

turn for the gentleneſs and goodneſs we had manifeſted when we were in a ſituation of greater proſperity.

On the twenty-firſt we arrived at Chitteldrough, and were conducted before the houſe of the Governor. After he had kept us waiting for a conſiderable time in the ſtreet, expoſed to the ſcorching heat of the ſun, he condeſcended to give orders reſpecting us. We were now ſeparated into two parties; and, being conducted to the upper-part of the Fort, our handcuffs were exchanged for irons for our legs of an exceſſive ſize: after this ceremony the party to which I belonged, conſiſting of thirty-four perſons, were ſhut up in one houſe; the other party, I am informed, were uſed exactly in a ſimilar manner. Hitherto we had each of us been allowed a ſervant; but now we were deprived of that indulgence, only one attendant being permitted for ſix or ſeven officers.

Our

Our priſon conſiſted of five rooms, which altogether did not meaſure more than thirty, or at moſt forty ſquare feet. We occupied four of them ourſelves, leaving the fifth to the ſervants. A hole in the door, and another in the roof, were the only paſſages for air and light; but in the front of the houſe there was a court about forty feet ſquare, in which we dreſſed our proviſions; the conſtant fires we had occaſion to keep in it, cauſed ſo conſiderable a draught of air through the houſe, that the foul vapours neceſſarily produced by ſuch a number of perſons ſo cloſely lodged in a warm climate, were regularly carried off. To this circumſtance muſt be aſcribed the degree of health we enjoyed during our unhappy captivity.

I am ſurpriſed that in Europe, where luxury is carried to ſo high a pitch, no perſon has yet diſcovered a method to introduce a current of air into apartments by the means of fire. It is, however a

very eaſy matter, for nothing more is required than to light a little wood in the fire-place, and leave the doors open. The external air will preſs on that which is rarefied in the room, and thus occaſion a conſtant circulation, which is extremely agreeable in the heats of ſummer: if death had not carried off ſome thouſand years ago, the Perſian Monarch who promiſed a reward for the diſcovery of a new pleaſure, I would have communicated this ſecret to him, and perhaps have been thereby able to repair the breach that my captivity has made in my fortune.

A guard of forty men was poſted at the gate of the court. A ſentinel kept watch night and day; he was armed with a club, but made no uſe of it, though frequently provoked by the injurious language, and even the blows; of which our people were rather liberal.

The walls of the court were as high as the houſe, and upon them were conſtantly

ſtantly placed three ſentries. Our only allowance of proviſion was two or three pints of rice a day. The ſix firſt weeks of our confinement all were ſupplied with wood, and were permitted to buy meat, fruits, vegetables, and milk; but this indulgence was afterwards denied to us, and we were obliged to ſubſiſt, without any ingredient to make the rice palatable excepting ſalt.

In this miſerable ſituation, condemned to waſte our youth in uſeleſs inactivity; without hopes of ever enjoying that proſperity, of which we had been ſo confident a little time before; and deprived of the glory and promotion we might have expected at Mangalore, if we had been at liberty; the ideas of miſery and death, which appeared inevitable, haunted our imaginations night and day. But this diſpoſition of mind did not laſt, for a few days after our arrival, as if by common conſent, we threw aſide our melancholy, and became

more chearful than we had ever been before. Many of us maintained the moſt perfect equanimity in the midſt of wretchedneſs and miſery, truly deplorable. The Indians were greatly aſtoniſhed at this change; for they are themſelves haughty and overbearing in proſperity, but incapable of ſupporting a reverſe of fortune. They were extremely ſurpriſed to ſee us as merry and contented, in our melancholy priſon, as if we were in a town that had juſt opened its gates to us, and abounded with all the luxuries which could feaſt the ſenſes. They hinted that they had ſecret orders to poiſon us, and that the period when theſe orders were to be put in execution was very near. But theſe threats only ſerved to raiſe our ſpirits, and we ſung *Rule Britannia* with the greater alacrity.

By chearfulneſs more than by any other means we were kept alive. A few among us, who could not accuſtom themſelves

themſelves to the proviſions that were allowed, and gave way to their melancholy, were in a ſhort time reduced to a ſtate of inconceivable weakneſs; the major part of them died, and the reſt were almoſt expiring, when the news of peace, and a difference in our treatment in conſequence of this, reſcued them from death.

It is truly aſtoniſhing to obſerve the effects of imagination, if I had not been eye witneſs to them, I ſhould never have conceived that they exiſted. Thoſe who kept up their ſpirits in priſon almoſt univerſally enjoyed as good a ſtate of health as they could have hoped for; on the other hand, ſuch as indulged in melancholy ideas became moſtly victims to them. The news of the peace gave new life to ſuch of our companions as had hitherto been in a languiſhing condition. Tranquillity of mind is the ſtrongeſt ſhield we can oppoſe againſt the ſtrokes of fortune; fear and uneaſineſs ſharpen her

her darts, and render the moſt trifling accidents of fatal conſequence. I remember to have heard that a ſtranger having died ſuddenly at an inn, a young woman who was preſent, imagined that his death was owing to the plague, and the belief of having caught this dreadful diſeaſe, ſo fatally wrought upon her ſpirits that ſhe expired a few hours after. Her neighbours, infected with the ſame fancy, died in great numbers, and if pains had not been taken to convince the people that the mortality was the conſequence of apprehenſion alone, this imaginary plague would have produced as dreadful effects as a real contagion. This ſtory is not at all incredible; for in all the different ſituations in which I have been, I have conſtantly obſerved that the diſpoſition of our minds has alleviated or aggravated our misfortunes. I do not think I hazard too much when I affirm that we can make a paradiſe a hell, and a hell a paradiſe. A good

man

man who falls a victim to ignorance and ſuperſtition has little dread of the flames; though his body is conſumed, he does not appear to ſuffer any great torment: on the other hand, a man guilty of crimes, or of a weak and timid diſpoſition, is tormented with the reproaches of his conſcience, or ſinks under trivial evils. The good Aceſtes tells Æneas that he ſhall triumph over his ill fortune by his patience and his courage; and I think the maxim perfectly true. I am well aware that we muſt ſometimes be borne down, but it is for the moſt part our own fault if we do not ſurmount our misfortunes and diſaſters.

LETTER XIV.

Madras, March 28, 1783.

THE cruel uſage we ſuffered during our confinement almoſt exceeds imagination; at laſt the news of peace came like the breath of heaven, to infuſe freſh life into our languid bodies. When a wretched officer, reduced to the laſt extremity, requeſted in the moſt earneſt terms to be indulged with a little milk, or any other trifle, he was brutally told that he ſhould not have it, leſt it ſhould prolong his life. Some of our companions were ſo weak, that they could not ſtir from the ground; and ſo emaciated, that their bones almoſt perforated their ſkin; yet they were inhumanly denied leave to buy mats and ſtraw for the comfort of what were, perhaps, the laſt moments of their exiſtence.

The Indians often practiſed upon us thoſe little tricks, which are ſo natural to the ſubjects of a deſpotic government. They ſuſpected that we had money, and obſerving that we were almoſt naked, and deſtitute of any covering to protect us from the rigours of the approaching cold ſeaſon, they tendered us their ſervices for the purchaſe of whatever we might want. We had already begun to feel the neceſſity of providing clothes, and were therefore induced to give them up that ſame money, which, when we underwent a diſgraceful ſearch, we had taken ſo much pains to conceal. We had no idea that there were in exiſtence men capable of ſuch baſeneſs as they were then plotting againſt us. Some time elapſed before they gave any account of the commiſſion they had undertaken; at laſt, after having put us off from week to week, under a variety of pretences, they informed us, that the camels, which were conveying our goods from

from a neighbouring town, had been drowned in paſſing the river, and that the whole of their loading was loſt.

Tired out with ill uſage, and hopeleſs of ſeeing any end of our miſery, we determined to attempt our eſcape from priſon. The Sepoys of Madras, who had been taken priſoners with Colonel Baillie, generally made part of the guard that was placed over us: many of theſe, in order to diſplay their loyalty and attachment to their new Sovereign, treated us with ſtill more rigour than the natives; but the reſt, full of gratitude from the remembrance of our former kindneſs, informed us of every thing that was going on; and though we ſuſpected the truth of their intelligence, we had afterwards reaſon to be convinced of their ſincerity, and indeed received from theſe friendly ſoldiers every ſervice in their power. A ſerjeant, who had often caſt an eye of pity on our ſufferings, was pitched upon to aſſiſt in the enterpriſe

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we were concerting. Him we queſtioned reſpecting the ſtrength of the garriſon, the number of Europeans and Bombay Sepoys, who were in the Fort, as well as the ſituation of the magazines, where we might ſupply ourſelves with powder and arms. Upon all theſe points he gave the moſt ſatisfactory anſwers; adding, that he had hopes that the Madras Sepoys would immediately declare for us, but that he was ſure they would take an active part in our favour, as ſoon as they ſhould ſee we were in poſſeſſion of the Fort. Animated with the hope of approaching liberty, and of emancipating great numbers of our countrymen and fellow-ſubjects, we conſidered with the moſt ſerious attention the means to be employed for the accompliſhment of our deſign. Money was immediately advanced to the Serjeant to treat ſuch of his friends as he ſhould think it neceſſary to ſecure in our intereſt: but either from his having no other intention than

that of cheating us of our money, or from his being ſuſpected of ſome private underſtanding with us. we ſaw no more of him till we were releaſed from our confinement.

A few days after the peace, we were invited to enter into the Nabob's ſervice. We were offered pay equivalent to that we received from the Eaſt India Company, with greater honours and authority. This propoſal excited in us all the contempt it deſerved; and, if our limbs had been at liberty, we ſhould have driven the propoſers out of our preſence. We deliberated for ſome time in what manner we ſhould make them ſenſible of our reſentment; but upon a little reflection we concluded that expreſſions of contempt would only provoke them to redouble their ill uſage, and therefore reſolved on a civil refuſal.

Although we were denied all the comforts of life by thoſe who had the immediate charge of us, yet people of diſtinction

tinction appeared in general to feel for our hard fate: they ſeemed ſorry we were treated with ſo much ſeverity, and when they viſited us, rarely tranſgreſſed the bounds of civility.

Not having been permitted to ſhave, our beards ſoon attained their full growth: this gave us ſo venerable, and at the ſame time ſo groteſque an appearance, that we could hardly forbear ſmiling at each other. Our ſtock of linen was reduced to two or three ſhirts each; and, to add to our diſtreſs, the waſher was forbid to attend the priſon oftener than once in a month or ſix weeks; ſo that we were two or three weeks without ſhifting. In the mean time our ſhirts acquired a brown cruſt, which gave them the ſtiffneſs of buckram, while legions of fleas, bugs, and lice, thoſe ſociable inſects that never deſert man in his miſery, covered every part of them, or frolicked on our bodies, without allowing us any reſpite by night or day.

In vain we waged conſtant war with theſe peſts; they multiplied faſter than we could deſtroy them, and revengefully ſatiating themſelves with our blood, left us wounded to the very bone. The ſcorpions and ſnakes alſo were our viſitors, and condeſcended to ſhare with us the horrors of the priſon.

Rats, which we might have turned to ſome account, were not leſs numerous than other vermine; it was not unuſual to find two or three of them quietly ſeated on our faces when we awoke in the morning. Thoſe gentlemen, who ſlept with their mouths open, ſometimes ſuffered the moſt diſguſting defilement; in ſhort they were ſo intolerable a nuiſance, that we at laſt determined, whatever trouble it might coſt us, to declare open war againſt, and extirpate them.

One night about twelve o'clock, when theſe vermin, without fear of traps, cats, or poiſon, were plundering our proviſions,

proviſions, or ſtrolling by thouſands about the priſon, we ſprung out of bed arming ourſelves with brooms, clubs, and ſticks. Some of us were poſted in ambuſcade to cut off the retreat of the enemy, while others, attacking them in front, put them to rout with great ſlaughter. The noiſe of the battle, the cries of the dying, were heard a-far; while the walls of the priſon ſhook, and the ground reſounded under our feet. Our guards, in ſpite of all their valour, were panick-ſtruck; and conſidering this tumult as a dreadful prelude to ſome deſperate attempt, uttered the moſt piercing cries of diſtreſs.

Perſons of the firſt conſequence came in haſte to the priſon, and ſearched every part of it; but when they found what had occaſioned the alarm, they enjoined us to ceaſe, under pain of being deprived of our proviſions, the ordinary puniſhment of a diſobedience of orders. As we had experienced that their threats

were uſually put into execution, we gave over the purſuit of our enemies.

I have no doubt that you are ſurpriſed we ſhould ſuffer ourſelves to ſtarve with ſuch numbers of theſe animals around us; but though I am convinced we might have found a great reſource in the rats, we never had the courage to eat any. Our prejudices were ſuch as to overcome at once the cravings of hunger and the deſire of ſelf preſervation.

Proviſions of all kinds are very cheap in the country; and if we could have obtained them at the market price, we might have ſubſiſted very comfortably on the money that was allowed us; but the Governor had laid a heavy tax on every thing we bought, by which the price of thoſe things we ſtood in need of were ſo raiſed, that few of us were able to purchaſe even when we had the opportunity.

On the fourth of June, in ſpite of our

poverty, we bought a ſheep, at an exorbitant price, to celebrate the King's birth-day. Lemonade was the richeſt liquor we had been able to procure; but, I aſſure you, that we drank our bumpers to the ſucceſs of his Majeſty's arms with as much hearty loyalty as any other of his ſubjects whatſoever.

It was pleaſant enough to obſerve how we ſpent our time in the priſon. In the morning, our firſt buſineſs for an hour or two was the putting to death a few thouſands of thoſe noiſome inſects, that had tormented us in the night. After thus juſtly revenging ourſelves, we purified our hands and bodies with freſh water, and proceeded to appeaſe the cravings of hunger with what we jocularly called *Row-di-dow:* this was a kind of pap made of the flour of rice boiled with water, and taken with butter-milk; it made one of our favourite diſhes. As ſoon as breakfaſt was over, the moſt induſtrious of us immediately

proceeded to pick the ſmall ſtones from among rice, and prepare it for dinner, this grain being our only food. About two o'clock ſeveral black cauldrons of a conſiderable ſize were brought into the houſe: five or ſix perſons with wooden ladles, the work of our own ingenuity, ſurrounded each of theſe, and having ſeated themſelves croſs-legged, tranſferred, with extraordinary quickneſs, the contents to large earthen diſhes: theſe we were much longer in emptying: for our appetites were not keen enough to have always a reliſh for rice ſimply boiled in water; but as we had nothing elſe to eat, we forced it into the ſtomach in ſpite of our diſguſt. The reſt of the day was ſpent in making cungie, which conſiſts of water, in which rice has been boiled till the finer parts of the grain are diſſolved; on this liquor, which has ſome thickneſs and a very pleaſant flavour, we ſupped. Such

were

were the occupations in which we ſpent each ſucceeding day.

In the latter part of our confinement we obtained permiſſion to buy ſheep; which gave us an opportunity of diſplaying a new ſpecies of induſtry. In a ſhort time we were able to kill and cut up a ſheep as well as any body whatever. So far were we from thinking this new employment diſagreeable, that we worked at it with all the ſpirit of real *amateurs*, and ſoon became expert butchers. It has been even whiſpered, that ſome perſons of the firſt note in the country were ſo well convinced of our ſuperior ſkill, as to offer us conſiderable wages to ſerve them in that capacity: Our dreſs was not leſs curious than any other circumſtance I have deſcribed. The ſhirts of the induſtrious were a complete piece of patchwork; thoſe of the more indolent had loſt their ſleeves peacemeal, and expoſed the bodies of their wearers in various places. Many had

had no other covering than a waiſtcoat without ſleeves; and ſome others, having no kind of garment whatever, had recourſe to the expedient of wearing the ſkins of beaſts dried in the ſun. A few of our gentlemen, who had brought cloth with them, made it into coats with ſo much ingenuity, that, if we had not had proofs to the contrary, we ſhould have concluded they had worked for ſeven years under the moſt expert taylors of London. But the rapid progreſs we all made in the arts of the cook and the butcher very ſoon convinced us that there is nothing which induſtry, ſtimulated by neceſſity, cannot accompliſh.

As ſoon as the treaty of peace was talked of, we were allowed better proviſions; but our ſtomachs were ſo weakened from our former want of proper food, that many of us were almoſt expiring when we were releaſed from our captivity.

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The twenty-fifth of March was the long-deſired day that reſtored us to liberty. Souls releaſed from purgatory do not experience more delicious ſenſations than thoſe we then enjoyed. The meeting with our friends alſo, from whom we had been parted when we were put into priſon, threw us into ſuch tranſports as are very rarely felt in the courſe of human life.

After we had ſhaved, and had put on decent clothes, we appeared ſo emaciated, and ſo unlike what we once were, that we hardly knew each other's perſons. When the firſt emotions of joy at our meeting had ſubſided, we diſcourſed on the treatment we had met with in our different places of confinement, and found it had been exactly the ſame.

As we were going out of the Fort, we were much ſurprized at finding all our European ſoldiers and ſepoys fettered two and two together; theſe unfortunate

fortunate men had borne all the cruelty that had been exerciſed upon them with the greateſt firmneſs, and had agreed to ſuffer death rather than enter into the Nabob's ſervice. This ſpectacle gave us ſuſpicions that we were to be conveyed to ſome other priſon: and a great number of irons which were brought out, as we were told for us, left no room for doubt. Conceive, if you can, our conſternation! Indeed we were almoſt driven to deſpair. But reſolving to periſh rather than return to the horrors of captivity, loaded with chains and affliction, and at the mercy of barbarous men, we determined to betake ourſelves to flight. We had already concluded on a plan for our eſcape, when we were told that if the ten ſenior officers would ſign an obligation by which they bound themſelves to anſwer for the conduct of all the priſoners, no one ſhould ſuſtain any injury, nor any officer be put in irons. Theſe gentlemen having immediately

diately conſented, received orders to wait on Dowlah Saib, Governor of the Fort. After the firſt ſalutations and compliments had paſſed on both ſides, they were deſired to ſit, and the bètel was preſented to them; this is a uſual ceremony obſerved all over India, and is a token of peace. Dowlah Saib then apologized for the cruel uſage we had ſuffered in a place under his command. He told them that he had obeyed the poſitive orders of the Nabob reſpecting us with the greateſt reluctance, and that he had never been rigidly exact in putting them into execution. That Tippoo had commanded that we ſhould have no other food than Natcheny; but as he (the Governor) knew that we could not ſubſiſt on ſuch coarſe proviſion, he had ſupplied us with rice at his own expence. This language appeared to us very extraordinary; for we had no idea that any one could be ſo mad as to cenſure the meaſures of a deſpot, who, on the

ſlighteſt information, would not fail to deprive him of his life. For in this country death certainly awaits whoever dares diſpute, or even comment upon, the orders of the ſovereign.

LETTER XV.

St. Thome, May 12, 1789.

WE requeſted Dowlah Saib to advance money to defray the expences of our journey to the Company's territories; but he anſwered that he could not do it without permiſſion from the Nabob; and that as the commiſſioners who came to treat of the peace, had refuſed to make any advances for our uſe, though they were called upon, we had nothing to expect but an allowance equal to what we had received in priſon. We did not give much credit to this ſtory when we heard it; but it was not long before we diſcovered that we had been ſhamefully neglected and ill uſed. Mr. S. one of theſe ambaſſadors, whom we met on our road, acknowledged that he had refuſed to lodge any money in the hands of the Governor

Governor on our account; 'because,' added he, 'the Nabob would have appropriated it to his own uſe, and it would have been of no benefit to you.' Was not this extraordinary language? Was the riſk of a few hundred pounds to come in competition with the very exiſtence of four thouſand of the moſt loyal ſubjects of his Majeſty? If theſe gentlemen had ſuffered, in their whole lives, the miſeries we have often experienced in a ſingle day, they would have riſked all their property to have alleviated our misfortunes, unleſs they had renounced every ſentiment of tenderneſs and humanity.

As ſoon as we had taken leave of the Governor we left the town. The pleaſure we took in admiring the ſucceſſive objects that preſented themſelves to our ſight ſeemed inexhauſtible; never had the country appeared ſo verdant, never had the flowers worn ſo brilliant a colouring, or exhaled ſuch exquiſite perfume.

ſume. We were fanned by a refreſhing breeze, which invigorated the organs of reſpiration, and ſeemed pregnant with life. The bleating of the ſheep, the ſight of cattle grazing in the fields, or the concerts of the birds as they ſung on the ſpray, threw us into a ſoft reverie, and attuned all our ſouls to joy. Things moſt indifferent in themſelves were to us a ſource of the higheſt pleaſure; and we ſtopped to contemplate a fall of water, or to liſten to the murmurs of a ſtream, as if our attention had been arreſted by one of theſe enchanting ſcenes which are diſplayed on our theatres. Yet Nature had aſſumed no new dreſs; we were not even in the moſt pleaſant ſeaſon of the year; the plants had not that freſhneſs they receive from the fine days which ſucceed the dreary ſeaſon of the rains.—But we were releaſed from priſon; new life was returning to animate our torpid limbs, which, now no longer reſtrained by fetters, we

could uſe with freedom. Thoſe diſguſting vermin that had ſo long been our tormentors were removed; and our eyes, which had long been reſtricted to the contemplation of nothing but the walls of our priſon, and the ſcenes of wretchedneſs they incloſed, were free to range over a variety of the moſt pleaſing objects. In a word, we were in poſſeſſion of liberty, that ineſtimable bleſſing, without which, in every condition, man muſt be miſerable.

After ſtrolling about two miles we came to a wood, where a new ſcene preſented itſelf; viz. the cavalry and infantry of the garriſon drawn up under different leaders. The infantry formed a ſort of oblong ſquare, and ſuſtained a ſham attack from the cavalry. The manœuvre was ill executed, and both corps appeared equally inexpert in the buſineſs of their profeſſion. A ſingle charge terminated their exploits for that day, and they ſeparated. The cavalry on their return

return paſſed near us; they rode with their knees almoſt as high as their chins, but appeared to have a firm ſeat on the ſaddle, and to manage their horſes with a good deal of dexterity.

On the twenty-eighth we began our march, and arrived on the twelfth of April at Aſcota, a ſmall Fort, which, according to our computation, is fifty leagues diſtant from Chitteldrough. It was here that we met the party which had eſcorted the commiſſioners and the priſoners that had been collected from different parts of Tippoo's dominions. Mr. Dalas, who commanded the party, had the charge of them all. The publick opinion has been various reſpecting the conduct of this officer towards the priſoners. I am not acquainted with the whole of it; but certain circumſtances, which have come to my knowledge, induce me to think that it was not ſo reprehenſible as it has been repreſented, and that he did every thing in his power

to oblige us. Some of the priſoners, who viſited him at his tent, imagined that he gave them a cold reception; but if they had conſidered the multiplicity of buſineſs that occupied him, and which both his honour and his intereſt required to be immediately diſpatched, I do not believe they would have thrown any cenſure on his behaviour.

The pleaſures we enjoyed at Aſcota were greatly heightened by the contraſt they formed with the hardſhips we had undergone in priſon, which were ſtill the uſual ſubject of our converſations. We were greatly affected at the recital of the ſufferings endured by ſuch of our brother officers as had been detained by their wounds at Nagur, and aſtoniſhed at their having been able to ſurvive them. They were at firſt put under the care of a French ſurgeon, who ſhewed them all the attention and tenderneſs they could expect; but death almoſt immediately deprived them of the

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ſervices of this good man. The ſurgeon that ſucceeded him was as coarſe and as barbarous in his manners as his predeceſſor was gentle and humane. His viſits were very rare, and always accompanied by brutality of language and behaviour. At laſt, even this ſavage was removed from them, and they had no medical attendance whatſoever. It is difficult to conceive a more diſtreſsful ſituation. Muſt not men be hardier than brutes to withſtand ſuch uſage?

We met at Aſcota the marine officers whom Suffrein had taken priſoners, and ſent to Hyder Ally.—You may eaſily imagine that they had not been treated with much more humanity than ourſelves; they were put in irons, and allowed no other ſuſtenance but rice and water; while the French officers, who were captured by Hughes, enjoyed all the comforts of life. They received from the Company the ſame pay we

did, and were only confined to the limits of a town. M. Suffrein was well aware of the ill uſage our officers would experience in the priſons of the Nabob: in order to obtain an exchange of priſoners, which he wanted, he threatened to deliver our people to the tyrant, and when he ſaw that he could not effect his purpoſe, he put his threats into execution. It is in vain for him to palliate this action by pretending that he knew not how to diſpoſe of them otherwiſe; for he might have ſent them to Cochin, or, at all events, have diſmiſſed them on their parole, rather than ſubject them to the barbarous treatment of the Indians. But if he acted ill towards his priſoners, and threw ſome diſhonour on the French name, he amply recompenſed his country by his courage and ſucceſs in exalting her to the high degree of power to which ſhe has attained in India; but it is fair to ſay that Hughes's indolence,

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and exceſſive love of oriental pleaſures, were of great aſſiſtance to the ſucceſs of the French Admiral.

Suffrein is brave, active, and impartial, and poſſeſſes all the qualities requiſite to form a great commander. He lets no opportunity ſlip of ſignalizing his courage and activity. If his fleet ſuffers any damage, he does not loſe a moment before he reſtores it to a ſtate fit for the annoyance of his enemy. Regardleſs of private enmity, all his views are directed to the aggrandiſement of his country. If an officer, though of the moſt noble family in France, is guilty of miſbehaviour, he immediately caſhiers him, and appoints, without any regard to birth, a man of merit to fill his place.

His conduct is no doubt, a little arbitrary; but, to be able to humble his enemies, it is perhaps neceſſary. Would to God that our commanders had adopted the ſame conduct; if they had, we ſhould

not have been reduced to our preſent circumſtances!

Suffrein uſed to ſay, 'I had many poltroons in ſuch an action; but Hughes had not fewer.' It is moſt certain that Suffrein appeared to have a great advantage over us at the cloſe of the war. What a pity that ſo great a man ſhould have ſullied his glory by his cruel behaviour towards his priſoners. And we may here obſerve, that courage and humanity are not always found in the ſame perſon.

Every body acknowledges Hughes to be a man of ſpirit; but they add, his indolence is exceſſive. It was with great difficulty that he was forced from Madras—his magnificent palace, the guards that attended him, the number of ſlaves and courtezans who were perpetually occupied in inventing new pleaſures and keeping his faculties in a ſtate of conſtant languor, made him often forget his duty to his country as well as what he owed

owed to his own reputation. He was frequently for weeks on ſhore immerſed in luxury and diſſipation, while Suffrein was reducing our maritime towns, or ruining our trade.

The loſs of Trincomale is to be aſcribed more to the indolence of Hughes, than to the activity of Suffrein. The poſſeſſion of this place was highly important from its ſituation, as well as other advantages enjoyed by thoſe who were maſters of it. The French had not a ſingle port in theſe latitudes till Trincomale afforded them one under its very ramparts, and which afforded complete ſhelter againſt ſtorms, as well as a place of refuge from the purſuit of their enemies in caſe they were of a ſuperior force. It is natural enough to ſuppoſe that the French fleet would have had conſiderable advantage over that of the Engliſh if peace had not terminated our diſputes at ſo critical a period. By the capture of Trincomale they ſecured to themſelves a harbour

where they might re-fit their ſhips after an engagement, and from whence they could avail themſelves of the few opportunities afforded by the weather during the monſoons, to clear the ſea of all the Engliſh ſhips they ſhould find; while the Engliſh fleet, laid up at Bombay, would be unable to oppoſe any obſtacle to their deſigns. If you only caſt your eye over the map of the peninſula, you will be convinced of this fact.

I muſt here give you an anecdote of Admiral Hughes, at which we may venture to laugh, becauſe the overſight that is the ſubject of it had no bad conſequences. Our army was engaged in beſieging Cuddalore by land, while Hughes was battering it by ſea, and preventing any ſupplies of proviſion from being thrown into it by the French. The beſieged were in a ſituation that rendered a long reſiſtance impoſſible. In the mean time Suffrein arrived to ſuccour the place; but, finding that Hughes's poſition ren-

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dered that impracticable, he endeavoured to draw him into an action. If our Admiral had poſſeſſed the leaſt ſagacity, he would have kept his ſtation; but probably he thought that it would be diſgraceful not to accept a challenge, and therefore left the Fort to chaſtiſe an enemy with whom he had often before tried his ſtrength; but Suffrein, inſtead of waiting for the Engliſh fleet, worked to windward, till by degrees he got into the ſtation it had quitted. He then immediately landed three or four thouſand men; and nothing could have ſaved our army from utter ruin but the happy news of the peace, which arrived juſt before an action was expected.

In order for a commander to ſucceed, extraordinary ability is requiſite; but an Admiral has no occaſion for the great circumſpection and minute attention required in a General. A General muſt extend his care to every thing; he muſt chuſe a healthy ſituation for his camps; he

he muſt procure abundant ſupplies of wholeſome proviſions for his troops, and keep his communication open with the places from whence he draws them; he muſt be conſtantly on his guard againſt a ſurpriſe, and maintain a ſevere and exact diſcipline; his whole conduct muſt not only be ſuch as will diſarm the malice and envy that are perpetually plotting his ruin; but ſuch as will win him the eſteem and confidence of all the troops under his command. In the hour of battle he muſt be as it were preſent in every part of his army; be thoroughly acquainted with the diſpoſition and ability of every individual. He muſt be attentive to repair his loſſes, and be continually on the watch to miſlead his enemies, and turn their errors to his own advantage. He muſt unite in his own character the moſt daring courage and the moſt perfect coolneſs: he muſt never give way to his own impetuoſity, or ſuffer himſelf to be ſeduced by flattering appearances;

appearances; he muſt be the ſoul of his army, which is to move only by his impulſe, without heſitating a moment to obey his leaſt orders. In a word, ſuch a number of great qualities muſt concur in this one character, that I am not ſurpriſed that the great men who have reached the heights of military ſcience, fixed the inconſtancy of fortune, and kept victory in their train, ſhould be ſo few; nor that they ſhould have been conſidered as the favourites and ſons of the gods. You will not ſuſpect me of ſuperſtition; but, convinced as I am of the ſublimity of the military art, I aſſure you that I ſhould not have heſitated to pay divine honours to a Cæſar or an Alexander, if I had had the good fortune to ſerve under men of their extraordinary merit.

I am in a great meaſure ignorant of the naval art; but it does not appear to me that it requires ſo many qualities as are indiſpenſably neceſſary for the conducting

ducting of an army. A fleet of thirty ſhips of the line is conſidered as a large force; but what is that to an army of thirty thouſand men? There are many means of victualling a fleet which are not open to an army: ſhips can have acceſs to almoſt all ports, and can go a hundred leagues in ſearch of any thing they want, without fatiguing their men or endangering their health; beſides, every ſhip is provided with proviſions and ſtores for the greater part of a year. If a fleet is hard preſſed by an enemy, it has no baggage to impede its flight, nor any apprehenſion of loſing its proviſions, or of being cut off from the communication with places whence it draws them. Every ſhip is under the management of a Captain, who is reſponſible for it. In time of action they all know their ſtations; and there are neither bayonets, pikes, nor cavalry, to break the ranks and throw the men into confuſion. Every ſhip is a great floating

ing caſtle, which takes every motion impreſſed upon it; and though the different parts of a fleet are, as it were, ſeparate and diſtinct, they direct all their operations to one point, at the diſcretion of their commander. Each ſhip is of ſuch ſtrength as to have conſiderable weight in an engagement; and their commanders are ſure of being able to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the performance of their duty; indeed their abſolute power over the crews, and the facility with which they can enforce obedience of their orders, would render their miſconduct inexcuſeable. From theſe premiſes it follows, that, if the Admiral poſſeſſes the confidence and regard of his captains, he can hardly ever fail of ſucceſs: at leaſt he has reaſon to hope, that, if he ſhould be worſted, he will nevertheleſs have done every thing that could have been expected from him. How different is the lot of a General! The beſt concerted meaſures, the wiſeſt plans, are

frequently abortive. Fortune ſports with the moſt conſummate wiſdom and experience, and obliges us to acknowledge the abſolute empire ſhe holds over human affairs. An order ill underſtood, or a panick fear; ſome unexpected motion of the enemy, or a variety of little incidents, have often deprived a General of a victory of which he has thought himſelf ſecure.

I know that Fortune has a great ſhare in the good or ill ſucceſs of naval expeditions, but courage and conduct will greatly diminiſh her influence over them.

Do not imagine that, full of the dignity of my own profeſſion, I mean to raiſe your opinion of the army by depreciating the navy; on the contrary, I declare, upon perfect conviction, that it is to our fleets that we are indebted for the moſt glorious empire in the univerſe. To our fleets we owe the reſpect ſhewn to us by all the nations who wiſh to rival our fame; and the having been

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able to maintain our trade againſt the combined forces of almoſt all Europe and America.

I cannot ſufficiently expreſs my joy that a prince of the blood-royal ſhould have condeſcended to ſerve in the Britiſh navy like a private gentleman, paſſing through all the gradations of rank neceſſary to give him a complete knowledge in detail of maritime affairs. If ever war ſhould again diſturb the peace of Europe and of India, there is reaſon to believe that our victorious fleets will reinſtate us in the poſſeſſion of that glory from which at this day we are a little fallen.

A check by land is of no conſequence; but a defeat at ſea is an irreparable misfortune to the vanquiſhed, and cannot fail to throw both wealth and power into the hands of the conqueror.

But if military affairs are expoſed to ſo many accidents, it appears to me highly neceſſary that the art of war

ſhould be improved to its utmoſt extent, and be ſubjected as little as poſſible to the caprice of fortune. But this ſeems the leaſt of our care. Our diſcipline is wretchedly defective; and there is hardly one evolution practiſed in the armies of Europe which is of any uſe in time of action. The ſoldiers are taught none but parade duty, while all the rougher exerciſes calculated to ſtrengthen the conſtitution, and enable men to bear with ſpirit the hardſhips of war, are fallen into neglect and diſuſe. The ancients, who were wiſer than we are in this reſpect, accuſtomed their ſoldiers, even when at exerciſe, to carry their proviſions and utenſils, and to uſe arms which were ſix times heavier than thoſe they actually bore during a campaign. By this means war was an occaſion of recreation to them, rather than of pain and fatigue. If we were to adopt the ſame practice in our army, we ſhould no more hear thoſe murmurs and complaints which are ſo

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common when our troops are required to perform laborious marches. If, inſtead of leaving regiments for whole years in the ſame garriſons, they were employed in marching from place to place, the ſoldiers would gradually be inured to fatigue, and the officers be accuſtomed to the want of thoſe conveniences which have become neceſſary from habit, and which can rarely be procured in the field.

We learnt likewiſe at Aſcota, that General Mathews, Major Futtrell, and eighteen captains, had ſuffered death by poiſon. Several of the Nabob's ſoldiers, who had been preſent at this ſhocking execution, informed us that a cup, containing a few drops of the juice of the MILK-BUSH had been preſented to each: they were told it was the Nabob's command they ſhould drink it. Thoſe who refuſed were bound, and the deadly draught forced down

their throats: as this poiſon is very ſubtil, they muſt have died in a ſhort time.

This barbarous act deprived us for ever of the ſervices of many young officers, who had ſignaliſed themſelves at the ſiege of Nagur, and who certainly would have been an honour to their country if they had lived. The loſs ſuſtained on this occaſion is irreparable; and, if the Company had had a ſufficient force, an exemplary vengeance ſhould have been taken for it.

We were likewiſe made acquainted with the hard treatment ſuffered by our ſoldiers and Sepoys. The Europeans had been uſed exactly like ourſelves, excepting that they had been allowed natcheny inſtead of rice. As to the Sepoys, there is no ſpecies of cruelty which was not tried for the purpoſe of compelling them to enter into Tippoo's ſervice. They were kept to hard labour from morning to night, without being

being allowed any food; they were loaded with ſuch exceſſive burthens that many fell under them, and expired through mere fatigue. Thoſe that ſurvived were throughout firm in their fidelity, and openly declared to their cruel tormentors that they would not enliſt under Tippoo's ſtandard till WE ſhould ſet them the example. The conſtancy of theſe men will ſurpriſe you, the more when you are informed that four thouſand of the MADRAS Sepoys, who had been taken priſoners ſome time before, had all entered into the ſervice of the Nabob.

Our Sepoys gave another ſtriking proof of their uncommon generoſity of ſpirit; they made a ſaving out of the ſmall allowance of proviſions granted to them, to diſtribute it among their European fellow-priſoners, who, they obſerved, were unaccuſtomed, and on that account leſs able to ſubſiſt upon a bad and inſufficient diet than themſelves.

What an uncommon example of tenderneſs and affection!

A few days before we arrived at Aſcota we ſaw Mr. Sadlier, the gentleman I have already mentioned: we ran to him with all the eagerneſs and joy of men who had paſſed ſo long a period without ſeeing any of their countrymen. He received us with a ſerious aſpect, was liberal of his compliments, and abundantly ceremonious; but hardly condeſcended to anſwer any of the numerous queſtions we put to him. We informed him of the inconveniences we had ſuffered, a great part of which were owing to our want of money; but he made no offer to aſſiſt us; and when we told him that our ſoldiers and Sepoys were ſtill in priſon, he replied with great HUMANITY, that it was lucky they were; for otherwiſe they would get drunk and go over to the enemy. You will have ſome difficulty in conceiving why men who are at liberty ſhould be more diſpoſed

to

to get drunk, than if they were in irons. As Mr. Sadlier did not explain himſelf further, we were ſome time before we could ſolve this enigmatical problem. But we afterwards learnt that this gentleman, who is well verſed in the abſtract ſciences, has diſcovered that iron has a ſtrong power of attracting the inflammable particles in certain liquids, and of preventing their riſing to the head and diſturbing the brain. We were much inclined to think this great man a brute and a thorough miſer; but we changed our opinion as ſoon as we were informed of his motives, and we are now convinced that his anſwer was dictated by the love of his country.—Three or four days afterwards we received a very ſeaſonable ſupply of hats, ſhoes, and ſtockings, which the Governor of Madras had taken care to forward to us at Aſcota.

Upon the refuſal of the Commiſſioners to advance money for our uſe, we were obliged to borrow of one of the

natives, at the enormous intereſt of four hundred *per cent.* for one month! This black uſurer had ſo little faith in our credit, that he would not leave his money a ſingle day in our hands after we had reached Aſcota. Colonel Brathwaite, who, like ourſelves, had been a priſoner, was no ſooner informed of our ſituation, than he immediately borrowed money for us, and endeavoured to do the ſame for the ſoldiers, without entertaining any ſuſpicion that men, who had refuſed to enter into the Nabob's ſervice in the hour of their diſtreſs, would deſert us when we were on the point of returning into our own territories.

We continued at Aſcota till the ſeventeenth, waiting for the other priſoners, and then continued our route towards the Britiſh poſſeſſions. On the twenty-eighth we reached Arcot. In this town we found General Lang, Commander in Chief in the Carnatic, from whom we met with a reception we no ways expected,

expected. Worn out with fatigue, hardly able to keep our legs, and ſuffering the privation of all the comforts and even neceſſaries of life, we could not harbour a ſuſpicion that we ſhould not find a good breakfaſt, and a ſtill better dinner, with a man who was paid by the Government to keep a publick table. But the General did not think on this ſubject as we did: our pale and ſtarved appearance made him cautious of truſting us within the reach of his proviſions. We went, however, to pay him our reſpects, and he did us the honour to take us all by the hand. A few, who wore the aſpect of famine leſs than the generality of us, were invited to dinner; of the reſt he did not take the ſlighteſt notice.

We quitted Arcot on the thirteenth of April, and on the fourth of May arrived at Mamelow, a town in the vicinity of Madras; and, according to our computation,

tation, at the diſtance of three hundred and forty miles to the eaſtward of Chitteldrough; from thence we paſſed to St. Thome, a very agreeable town, ſituated on the ſea-ſhore, and ſtill nearer to Madras than the former.

On the moment of our arrival, General Ogle ſent his Aid du Camp to invite us all to dinner, and to requeſt that we would uſe his houſe and table as our own till we ſhould have taken our arrangements. Colonel Floyd, whom we met by accident, took us to breakfaſt with him, and in the handſomeſt manner made us the ſame offers as General Ogle.

Captains Maitland of the 73d, and Macdoual of the 42d, ſent carriages to Mamelow for ſuch of our companions as choſe to go to their houſes, and kept a publick table for us all the time we remained in the town.

You ſee that, though there are ſome monſters of inhumanity in the world, Providence has placed in it many generous ſouls, who are able to feel the pleaſure of ſuccouring the unfortunate.

LETTER XVI.

Calcutta, Jan. 15, 1785.

As you have conducted me ſafe to Madras, let us now take a retroſpect of the country we have paſſed over, that you may have a more particular knowledge of the evils of every kind which are produced by an arbitrary government.

Many officers, who were enfeebled by long confinement, or afflicted with diſeaſe, were carried from Chitteldrough to the Carnatic in doulies, which are a kind of ſmall beds, uſed in India for the conveyance of the ſick when an army is in the field. In every place under the Company's government there are men accuſtomed to this duty, four of whom carry a man with great eaſe, but a ſmaller number is never employed. Under Tippoo Sultan no attention is paid either to number,

number, ſtrength, or the practice that thoſe who are made to carry the doulies have of ſuch work. His people uſed to preſs the labourers from the field, and compel them to carry our ſick fifteen and ſometimes twenty miles in a day. A douly was uſually carried by two men, and never by more than four. The ploughmen were frequently taken from their tillage to have the honour, as they were told, to ſerve the great BAHADOR. This is one of the pompous titles aſſumed by Tippoo.

If theſe poor wretches, almoſt expiring with fatigue, ventured to expreſs any diſcontent, they were immediately ſaluted by blows with the ſtock of a firelock. They were ſometimes kept for three or four days almoſt without ſuſtenance, and without a farthing of pay to purchaſe it. If they preſumed to requeſt any, though on their knees, they ſuffered the ſevereſt uſage from the Sepoys, and were told they were too much

much honoured in being permitted to die in the Nabob's ſervice. Yet theſe ſhocking abuſes ſeemed to make no impreſſion on their minds; as ſoon as their hunger was ſatisfied they appeared as cheerful and contented as if they had experienced the beſt treatment, and in every reſpect as eaſy as if they lived in the midſt of plenty. Their ſtupid and contented look is a ſure proof that tyranny degrades both the bodies and minds of thoſe who are ſubject to it. Indeed the baneful effects of deſpotiſm are no leſs evident from the face of the country than from the appearance of theſe poor ſlaves. The whole province, till within forty miles of Nagur, is little better than a deſert, though the ſoil bears the marks of great fertility. To cultivate land a man ſhould be maſter of his own time; for if he is dragged away from the tail of his plough, or while he is gathering in his harveſt, he is rendered poor, loſes his inclination for induſtry,

and,

and, by degrees, falls into all the little vices of which I have already ſaid ſo much, and which conſtitute the Indian character.

Every thing declares the poverty and wretchedneſs of the country. You may walk a whole day without ſeeing a ſingle habitation. A few ſmall ſpots of ground are cultivated for the immediate ſupply of neceſſaries to the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of the villages, which are very ſmall, and at a great diſtance from each other; but, excepting theſe, nothing is ſeen through the whole extent of the landſcape but brambles and barren ſhrubs.

Theſe villages are in general ſurrounded by a weak wall, as a protection againſt the incurſions of the cavalry. But, from Chitteldrough, we did not ſee one that might not have been razed to the ground in an hour by two pieces of cannon.

The moſt unfeeling ſoldier could not behold the ravages made by the enemy, in all our country as far as Madras, without emotion. Inſtead of great and magnificent towns, formerly rich and flouriſhing; inſtead of immenſe and numerous reſervoirs, conſtructed to ſupply the deficiencies of a droughty ſeaſon; inſtead of publick edifices, devoted to the reception and accommodation of travellers, and ſumptuous and well-adorned pagodas, nothing meets the eye but huge heaps of ruins. Theſe melancholy ſcenes recalled to our memory all the horrors of war, and drew a tear of compaſſion for the misfortunes of ſo numerous a people, reduced at once from eaſe and opulence to the extremes of wretchedneſs and want.

Before Hyder Ally's invaſion of the Carnatic, it was certainly the happieſt and moſt populous country in all Hindoſtan. Mahomet Ally, who enjoys the

ſovereignty

ſovereignty over it, is equally abſolute with the Nabob of the Myſore; but having taken many ideas of policy from the Engliſh, and being aſſiſted by the advice of the Council of Madras, he makes a very moderate uſe of his deſpotic powers. I cannot find that he has ever been guilty of any injuſtice towards his people. He did not allow the farmers to be forced from their fields under the pretence of his ſervice; and, by the mildneſs and equity of his government, made every man ſure of enjoying the fruits of his own labour. This ſecurity gave ſpirit to the people, and encouraged them in the execution of the moſt laborious and expenſive undertakings. But ſince the Carnatic has been in the hands of the Myſorean conqueror, it is a barren and depopulated waſte. Hyder, in the idea that the poverty of his country aroſe from the defect of population rather than from the abuſes of its government, tran-

ſported all the conquered inhabitants, who eſcaped the fury of his arms, into his own territories. By theſe means our provinces remained without any cultivation; and, in the room of thoſe plentiful crops which covered the fields, and of thoſe rich paſtures which fed ſo much cattle of every kind, nothing was to be ſeen but unwholeſome marſhes and barren thickets. The old inhabitants are returning in crowds ſince the peace, but it will coſt them much time and labour before they can put things on their former footing; but perſeverance and the aſſiſtance of government will, I make no doubt, reſtore the country to its ancient flouriſhing and proſperous ſtate. Lord Macartney greatly exerts himſelf to accompliſh this valuable object: he has yet levied no tax on the returning inhabitants, and propoſes to continue the exemption for ſome time to come. However this is not ſufficient: money ſhould be advanced to the farmers, to

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enable them to put their lands into condition, and renew their trade; but the publick treaſury is too much exhauſted to allow of ſuch an indulgence.

I believe you already know that Mahomet Ally, having loſt a great part of his dominions, and finding that he could turn the remainder to no account, gave up the whole of his territories to the Engliſh on condition of being paid an annual revenue: you are likewiſe not ignorant that our diſaſters in the Carnatic were owing to the cowardice of the native officers, who abandoned forts of conſiderable ſtrength as ſoon as an enemy appeared before their ramparts; while the private ſoldiers, who, according to the Eaſtern cuſtom, had received no pay for ſome years back, refuſed to hazard their lives for a prince who did not give them what was ſo juſtly their due. This circumſtance obliged OUR OWN commanders to ſur-

render places that were impregnable if they had been properly defended. You, without doubt, are informed that Lord Macartney made many ſtrong repreſentations to his ſuperiors at home on this ſubject; and that, in ſpite of all the reaſons he advanced, the Company gave orders that the Nabob of Arcot ſhould be immediately and fully reinſtated in the poſſeſſion of his territories. His Lordſhip has deferred putting theſe orders into execution for a conſiderable time; and declares that he will reſign his office if the Company ſhould perſiſt in its reſolutions in favour of Mahomet Ally. This firmneſs is much approved here, becauſe Lord Macartney cannot be reſponſible for a government in which a native prince has ſo much influence.

We are ſo great an obſtacle to the exerciſe of the deſpotic power of theſe Nabobs, that they cannot but have a great diſlike to us. If it ſhould once happen

happen that a prince of weak understanding ſhould be ſeated on the throne of the Carnatic, it is much to be feared that ſome of the neighbouring powers would prevail upon him to declare war againſt us; in that caſe we ſhould all at once be diſpoſſeſſed not only of the ſtrongeſt fortreſſes, but of the moſt rich and productive provinces. Fort St. George itſelf would infallibly fall under their united force. Thus the Company might pay a dear price for rejecting the advice of a man, who, in my opinion, has every quality of a good Governor, and is capable of reſtoring this country to all its former proſperity.

If you have heard the opinion entertained by the army of Lord Macartney, and any accounts of his behaviour to us on our return from impriſonment, you will be ſurprized that *I* ſhould undertake to be his advocate. You muſt not imagine, however, that I am under

obligations to him for greater favour than he ſhewed to others. On our arrival at Madras we could obtain no more than forty pounds ſterling each; and, though ſeveral hundred pounds were due to us for arrears of pay, we received no more than the King's allowance, which did not amount to the fifth part of what was neceſſary for our immediate ſubſiſtence. I have been ſeveral times with Lord Macartney on buſineſs; his behaviour to me was generally haughty, and ſometimes contemptuous. I muſt acknowledge I did not pay him all the reſpectful attentions he was accuſtomed to; and my craving ſtomach might ſometimes prevail on me to tranſgreſs the bounds of ſtrict decorum. As I was every day in company with officers who ſeemed to think it a duty to abuſe his government, I uſed to follow their example, and ſpeak as ill of it as any one among them. I confeſs I was wrong to be

thus

thus carried away by the ſtream. For, to ſay that a man of the leaſt underſtanding can be guilty of acts of ſeverity without having any particular intereſt in view, is to ſuppoſe him an unnatural and abominable character. It is my own opinion, that the Governor kept us in this ſtarving condition becauſe he conſidered the peace to be not yet firmly eſtabliſhed, and becauſe he apprehended a rupture with Tippoo, which rendered it neceſſary to retain all the publick money in the treaſury as well for the payment of the ſoldiers, to whom arrears of two or three years accumulation were due, as for other poſſible exigencies of the ſtate. If, however, ſuch motives had been made known to us, we had patriotiſm enough to bear with patience all the diſtreſs we were ſuffering. But his Lordſhip was afraid that Tippoo would diſcover his deſigns; and therefore affected to be opulent even while he was

under the neceſſity of refuſing to ſatisfy our juſt demands.

The King's officers formed a powerful party againſt him, and watched with great attention every meaſure he took: but they were able to diſcover nothing objectionable in his conduct, except that he took care to draw his own ſalary every month from the treaſury, though he would not ſuffer a farthing to be iſſued for the uſe of any other ſervant of the Company. But what is this in compariſon with the proceedings of his predeceſſors?—Theſe parties had nearly occaſioned great miſchiefs in the country, and were the cauſe of the diſputes I have touched upon in ſome former letters. A ſpirit of jealouſy and animoſity prevails between the King's and the Company's troops; and probably will never be quelled till, by ſome happy ſtroke of policy, the attention of both ſhall be directed to one common object. As the King's officers are the

ſuperiors

ſuperiors of thoſe of the ſame rank in the Company's ſervice, they lay claim to all the ſituations of honour and profit, in which they ſuperſede thoſe who are in poſſeſſion of them as ſoon as they arrive in India. It is THEY that direct the attack and defence of fortified places, &c.

The old ſervants of the Company, who have out-lived the hardſhips of a military life, and borne for years the inclemency of the climate, find themſelves on a ſudden deprived of their commands, and compelled to act an under part to give room to young men, who, as faſt as they come from Europe, are placed in the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſtations.

Before we left Madras we received bills on the government nearly to the full amount of the ſums due to us; and theſe paid as ſoon as the Governor was informed of our diſtreſs; indeed long before we had any right to expect it.

Calcutta,

Calcutta, the capital of our poſſeſſions in the Eaſt, is ſeated on the banks of the River Hougly, at the diſtance of about eighty miles from the ſea. In ſailing up the river the eye is forcibly ſtruck with the admirable ſcenery of the country. Every moment new beauties diſcover themſelves; the traveller is, as it were, wrapt in wonder at ſo profuſe a diſplay of all the riches of Nature. As you approach the city, a number of houſes, agreeably ſituated and elegantly built, excite a high and favourable idea of the taſte and magnificence of the inhabitants. Yet the accounts of their luxury have been exaggerated; it is certainly great, but not by any means equal to that of Europe, allowing for the difference of climates. It muſt be acknowledged that no man of conſequence ever makes uſe of his legs, or goes out of his houſe, but in his palanquin: the ladies are carried in a kind of ſedan chair, and the gentlemen on little

couches,

couches, ſix feet long and two feet broad, which in ſummer have generally a covering of ſcarlet, and, in the rainy ſeaſon, one of oiled cloth; they are lined with ſilk and well ſtuffed with cotton. Eight bearers are generally employed to carry a palanquin, and they find no difficulty in travelling with it at the rate of three miles and a half an hour. A man walks by the ſide of the vehicle with an umbrella twelve feet in circumference to keep off the ſun. Perſons of conſequence are preceded by twenty or thirty armed domeſtics, who clear the way for their GREAT MASTER; and in the night-time their way is lighted by twelve flambeaux. The entertainments of the inhabitants of Calcutta are very ſumptuous: Europe as well as both the Indies are ranſacked for articles of luxury to ſupply their tables. What would you ſay of an apartment forty feet high and a hundred and twenty feet ſquare, lighted by

five or ſix chryſtal luſtres; a table covered with the richeſt porcelain that ever came from China, the beauty of which is ſet off by the light of twenty or thirty wax candles ſurrounding a fountain of roſe-water, which ſpreads its freſhneſs and perfume all around; thirty or forty ladies magnificently dreſſed, adorned with the coſtlieſt jewels of the Eaſt, and attended by an equal number of gentlemen equipped in the ſame rich and elegant ſtyle; five or ſix attendants behind the chair of each gueſt; a band of muſicians, who melt the ſoul by tender airs, while exquiſite dainties are reſtoring the body, and gratifying the taſte in the moſt voluptuous manner? You might perhaps think yourſelf in paradiſe if you were at ſuch a feaſt. A cold and phlegmatic Dutchman one day aſked me what engaged my attention the moſt at theſe entertainments, the ladies, the muſick, or the delicacies of the table? If you were preſent at them I am ſure the

power

power of Bacchus and Ceres would yield to that of Venus, and that the ladies would wholly engroſs your adoration. As for my own part I am ſo entirely occupied by the beauty of theſe amiable creatures, that any other object makes little impreſſion on my ſenſes.

The converſation of the young men here is extremely agreeable: you will no where meet with ſuch generoſity and diſintereſtedneſs. The change that takes place in an Engliſhman after a reſidence of ſix months in this country is really aſtoniſhing. One would be almoſt led to believe that the mind of man expands in proportion to his diſtance from the place of his nativity: the character of the inhabitants of the different ſettlements we ſaw in our way hither, ſeems to favour this opinion. I have, however, no faith in the effects of climate, nor do I think they operate any alteration in our diſpoſitions. There is

no young adventurer who embarks for India without expectations of making a rapid fortune. On his arrival at Bengal, as he ſees a number of lucrative employments paſſing rapidly through different hands, he naturally flatters himſelf that he will ſpeedily attain the height of his wiſhes. To acquire a fortune, he is not obliged to ſtoop to thoſe little and dirty tricks which degrade the character of thoſe who practiſe them; on the contrary, he aſſumes a manner of living which would bear the name of prodigality in every other part of the world. In the other ſettlements Europeans are diſappointed on their arrival; for their gains are comparatively ſmall, and the opportunities of making money occur very rarely; ſo that they are obliged to truſt to their economy for the fortunes they expected to make at one ſtroke; and habits of parſimony remain even after the neceſſity of them is over. You muſt not, however, ſuppoſe that this general

general rule does not admit of exceptions: I have been acquainted, at Bombay, with ſeveral young ſervants of the Company who live handſomely on a very moderate income; they indeed poſſeſs all the ſocial virtues, and may hereafter ſhine among the firſt men of the age.

Though the ſociety of the young bachelors is delightful, that of the married people is troubleſome and full of the moſt ridiculous formality. In the day-time the ladies never ſhew themſelves but at table; their moſt intimate friends do not ſee them any where elſe. Eight o'clock at night is the happy hour when they begin to appear: but they have not that eaſe of behaviour which is the great charm of European circles. They frequently viſit; but I am ſure there are not four of them in the ſettlement who are really on a friendly footing. If thoſe who ſee each other moſt frequently meet at a public

place, they ſhew the ſame coldneſs and formality in their manner as if they were perfectly ſtrangers.

One is ſurpriſed that matrimony ſhould occaſion ſo great a difference in the cuſtoms of the inhabitants, and at firſt we are puzzled to account for it; but the difficulty ceaſes when one conſiders that a lady has no ſooner ſet foot in Calcutta than ſhe is introduced to all the company of her ſex in the place, whoſe acquaintance ſhe makes it a point to cultivate ever after. The affections are diſſipated by ſuch numerous connexions, and the heart left void of ſentiment. But, ſince the women meet only in the evening, why do they not admit their friends to paſs a few of the long hours of the morning with them? So they might: but huſbands are ſavage creatures, and always in fear for their foreheads. But, of all the inhabitants of this world, the Bengalian are the moſt furious and intolerant on the ſcore of gallantry.

gallantry. I remember to have heard that in the year 1765, towards the end of the month of May, the married men, tired of living in perpetual dread and alarms, aſſembled together to conſult on the means of ſecuring themſelves from every injury of this kind. Of this fact you may be aſſured; for a woman ninety-one years old, of ſound mind, but of infirm body, related all the particulars of it to me but two days before ſhe departed this life. You know that LAST WORDS have particular weight, and that the ancients had ſo great a faith in them that they conſidered them as prophecies. In this council of huſbands it was decreed, that *in conſideration of the phyſical effects of a warm climate on female conſtitutions, and the little confidence that could be repoſed in friends in certain critical ſituations, every male, from the age of fifteen years to forty, ſhould be interdicted from converſing with any*

married woman, except in the preſence of her huſband, under pain of perpetual and ſeparate confinement for both the offending parties, who ſhould be cut off for ever from all communication with the reſt of the world.

But the women, to their honour be it ſaid, did not remain ſilent on this important occaſion: they aſſembled in a body, and made a ſpirited oppoſition againſt ſo cruel and perverſe a decree. They ſolicited, they entreated, they tried the force of tears, and of proteſtations of eternal fidelity and love. But the huſbands, who looked on all theſe as the ſnares of cuckoldom, were immoveable; and, firm to their purpoſe, threatened their wives with ſo cloſe a confinement, that they ſhould not even ſee the light of day. They then proceeded to diſcharge the footmen, lay down their coaches and chairs, and to diſmiſs the attendance of hair-dreſſers, perfumers, dancing-maſ-

ters,

ters, &c. &c. &c. All theſe outrages were borne by the ladies with great courage and patience: but when theſe cruel men withheld the performance of that taſk of conjugal duty, which Hymen impoſes on all his votaries, and offered their tribute of love to infamous proſtitutes, they loſt all ſpirit, and made haſte to capitulate with their tyrants. To be reinſtated in their ancient privileges they ſacrificed all their favourites. The coaches, however, were reſumed, and the footmen and other miniſters of luxury, reſtored to their former occupations. The cauſe of gallantry, indeed, ſuffered a good deal; for all the ſentimental and languiſhing lovers were baniſhed, and the door for ever cloſed to all but the inſenſibility of impotence, or the coldneſs of old age.

You think men lunatic, who ſuffer themſelves to be thus carried away by jealous dreams, and I was once of the

ſame opinion; but, if the report of deep ſpeculators on this ſubject are true, jealous huſbands ſhould rather be the objects of our compaſſion. It is aſſerted that a certain ſubtil vapour exhales from the conjugal bed, which diſturbs the brain and gives unfounded apprehenſions that wives are diſpoſed to inconſtancy and libertiniſm. Some perſons, profoundly read in mythological hiſtory, pretend that Bacchus, in his progreſs through this part of the world, met, on the banks of the Indus, a new-married man, by whom he was rallied for the golden horn he bore on his forehead.—'Raſh youth,' ſaid the God, 'to teach you to ſtand in awe of the lords of heaven, I denounce upon you, and all the inhabitants of theſe countries, a perpetual dread of wearing horns, as ſoon as you ſhall have taſted the ſweets of matrimony.' But this ſtory muſt be forged; becauſe, in all the nations I have viſited,

viſited, I have always ſeen the huſbands plagued with this diſtemper of the mind.

The publick amuſements here are balls, concerts, and plays: they are uſually very brilliant, and are frequented by many ladies who wear jewels to the amount of twenty or thirty thouſand pounds ſterling. Many of them dance with as much eaſe and grace as is diſplayed in the moſt faſhionable aſſemblies of London. The muſick is generally very inſipid; but when Lady C. Miſs P. M. or Mrs. B. embelliſh the room with their preſence, their graceful attitudes, the bewitching ſoftneſs in their eyes, the elegance, richneſs, and good taſte, of their dreſſes and ornaments, arreſt the attention of all beholders, and carry joy and pleaſure into every heart.

Calcutta has no comedians by profeſſion; but theatrical pieces are performed by the gentlemen of the ſettlement:—ſome

of them acquit themſelves very creditably; and Mr. Randall, with a little practice, would make a conſpicuous figure on the firſt theatres of Europe.

LETTER XVII.

Calcutta, Feb. 1, 1785.

SINCE I am now in the country where the religion of the Hindoos exiſts in its greateſt purity, I will communicate to you what I have heard and ſeen of this extraordinary people. You muſt not, however, expect any long or learned diſquiſition on the origin and fundamental principles of their religious inſtitutions: the duties of my profeſſion, as well as other occupations, prevent me from going deeply into the ſubject: all that I can promiſe is a faithful account of their moſt remarkable cuſtoms, of which I have been a ſpectator almoſt every day. However, though I ſhould exceed theſe narrow limits, you may depend upon the truth of the facts I relate.

I underſtand that many perſons have of late pretended to be in poſſeſſion of

manuſcripts, which are a key to the myſteries of the Gentoo religion; but, till theſe papers are produced and admitted by Gentoos themſelves to be authentic, I think they ſhould be conſidered as ſpurious and of no authority whatſoever. In the moſt flouriſhing æra of the Emperors of Hindoſtan, when the courtiers were fired with the deſire of acquiring knowledge, ſeveral of the Bramins, in the higheſt repute for their learning, were ſent for to court. After they had refuſed anſwering to ſuch queſtions as were put to them reſpecting their myſteries, recourſe was had to the moſt cruel torments, but to no purpoſe; for they ſtill obſtinately held their peace. As this fact is confirmed by the concurring teſtimony of all the Mogul hiſtorians, I cannot but conſider the pretended ſucceſs of theſe Europeans as highly problematical. What promiſes could we make, or what temptations could we lay in the way of theſe people,

which

which had not already proved ineffectual? The Hindoos are of great ſo-never drinking nothing but water; we could avail ourſelves, therefore, of no moment of inebriety to obtain from them the ſecret of their religion. I am myſelf thoroughly perſuaded that all our ſuppoſed information on this head is nothing but vague conjecture, formed in the endeavour to account for ſome very extraordinary cuſtoms and uſages. Whatever may be the caſe, I ſhall proceed to give you the reſult of my own inquiries and obſervations on the ſubject.

The Hindoos are divided into ſeveral caſts or ſects, each of which is obliged always to follow the ſame occupation. No one can raiſe himſelf above the condition of his forefathers. An individual who acquires great riches, or renders himſelf reſpectable by his virtue and good conduct, ſtill continues to be treated by thoſe of a ſuperior caſt with haughtineſs and contempt: though he were a Locke,

a Newton,

a Newton, or a Pope, he will never be admitted to the converſation of men who are in fact born his equals. What an obſtacle is this to induſtry! and how well ſuch a ſyſtem is adapted to degrade the character of human nature, and fit it for the yoke of tyranny! Our diſtinctions of *noble* and *baſe-born* have a great affinity to this prejudice. The Engliſh are, however, leſs ſubject to it than all their neighbours. The ſon of a cobler may reach the higheſt dignities civil, military, and eccleſiaſtic; and, if he has diſtinguiſhed himſelf by talents, be honoured with a ſtatue after his death.

The Bramins conſtitute the firſt caſt. They are ſuppoſed to be deſcendants of Brama, who founded their religion, who is conſidered as a god. They are believed to participate, to a certain degree, in the Divine Nature, and are looked upon as greatly ſuperior to all other men. It is a capital crime to ſtrike or even to lift a hand againſt a Bramin.

To

To this caſt is committed the rites and ceremonies of religion: their privileges are almoſt unbounded; they can put to death, with impunity, any man of an inferior caſt. It is but reaſonable that the unlimited power to deſtroy ſhould be balanced by an unlimited right to multiply: accordingly, if a Bramin informs a brother of the ſame caſt that God has revealed to him in a viſion that beautiful children, favoured by heaven, will be produced from his commerce in the temple with the wife or ſiſter of the man he applies to, the choſen woman is immediately ready to fulfil the divine command.

The Bramins admit no converts; a circumſtance not much in their favour: for a ſect, convinced of the truth of its tenets, is naturally inclined to make proſelytes. I do not, however, believe that the Bramins reject them from any evil diſpoſition; the blame is to be laid on the founder of the religion, who was probably

probably a tyrant, and desirous of cutting off all communication with strangers. For in what cast could a new believer be received?—Not in that of the Bramins; for they are sprung from the gods: nor in any of the inferior casts, for they all pretend, from first to last, to partake in some measure of the essence of the Divinity.

Some of the pagodas, or places of worship, are great shapeless masses, which have cost immense sums. Stones of enormous size have been used in constructing them; some of these are observed in the roofs, more than thirty feet long, and must be from twenty to thirty tons weight.

In these heavy buildings they have images representing the attributes of the Divinity, which are executed with great art. The proportions are finely observed, and they are upon the whole in a style of taste which one would not expect to see in such edifices. Some of these idols

seem

ſeem not much calculated to inſpire devotion, for they are repreſentations of men and women in the moſt obſcene attitudes.

In the ſanctuary of each pagoda is an image of Priapus, the ſymbol of the *generating power*, which is conſecrated to the *deſtroying power*, in order to inſinuate, no doubt, that it is to war, and mortality of every kind, that the generating power owes its origin, its developement, and its perfection. In fact, if all bodies were not to return into the maſs of general matter, which is the ſource of all productions, how would plants or animals be ſupplied with aliment; or how would that perpetual youth of nature, which ſo much admire, be maintained?

Barren women have recourſe to this idol. After having long implored the favour of the god, they touch the part that is endowed with ſuch exquiſite ſenſibility, with the emblematical repreſentation of the generative power. As ſome

young

young prieſts are always preſent at this ceremony, it ſeldom fails to produce the deſired effect.

Ablutions, ſo neceſſary to health in hot climates, are required by the Hindoo inſtitutions to be performed four times every day; and if two men of different caſts ſhould chance to touch each other, or even to enter into one another's houſes, they are obliged to waſh themſelves before they take any food.

The Hindoos believe in the metempſychoſis, but with ſome variation. According to their doctrines, a man who has led a virtuous life on earth aſcends to heaven immediately after his death, where he enjoys eternal happineſs. They do not, however, believe that there is any great number of perſons ſo undefiled as not to have occaſion to paſs into the bodies of brute animals to expiate their crimes, and cleanſe them from the impurities they had contracted in this life. Tranſmigration is a kind of purgatory

in which the ſoul is freed from the defilement of human paſſions.

There is no doubt but that Pythagoras travelled into India and took his notions of the metempſychoſis from the religion of the inhabitants. This ſyſtem was indeed intitled to the admiration of a wiſe man. We ſee nothing loſt in the great body of univerſal matter: the particles of ſubſtances decompoſed in the earth are preſented to us under new forms: all Nature is in conſtant motion, and the component atoms are conſtantly paſſing from one body to another. A philoſopher, accuſtomed to reaſon by induction, might readily conclude that the ſoul, which is the principle of life, paſſes into the bodies of different animals before it reaches the ſituation of its final reſt. The belief of the tranſmigration of ſouls is an error; but it is the error of a great mind, and may perhaps correct other defects in the inſtitutions of the Gentoos. As they believe that the ſouls of their

forefathers

forefathers may be infuſed into the bodies of their cattle or other animals, they abſtain from killing them; and the precepts of their religion having entirely interdicted the uſe of every kind of animal food, (which in this climate is perhaps unwholeſome) their diet is confined to fruits, vegetables, and roots, which in India are remarkably ſubſtantial and nouriſhing. Men, accuſtomed from their infancy to abſtain from every kind of cruelty towards brutes, ought naturally to be humane and benevolent towards their own ſpecies. And this would infallibly be the caſe if the ſame religion had not hardened the hearts of the ſuperior caſts; for they hold thoſe that are born their inferiors as beings below even the moſt worthleſs animals. They take away the life of a man with leſs ſcruple than we kill a fowl. To *ſtrike a cow* would be ſacrilege; but a Bramin may *put a man to death* when he liſts.

Theſe people, who in general have ſo little active courage, nevertheleſs perform the different penances impoſed upon them by their prieſts, or required by their religion, with great firmneſs. In certain ſeaſons of the year you may every day ſee men, who to acquit themſelves of their vows, or to expiate their offences, have kept their arms above their head till they have loſt the uſe of them, and their hands and fingers are perfectly dried up: others clench their fiſts for ever; and even the acute pain occaſioned by the nails piercing through the fleſh, does not produce any change in their reſolution: many remain months in one poſture, motionleſs as the ſtatues in their temples. There is in India a ſect of philoſophers, but very different from thoſe that we call by that name in Europe; for they are grave Theologians, who are neither powdered nor perfumed; they wear no wigs, and their hair and beard have never ſubmit-

ted to the razor; they go entirely naked, and neither ſcoff at God or his ſaints, with a faith as devout as that of the moſt ſuperſtitious woman. They have a body capable of ſupporting greater ſufferings than the moſt zealous and perſecuted Martyrs: they believe in the exiſtence of a God, of an evil ſpirit, of Genii who take a part in human affairs, and of an immortal ſoul which animates their bodies, and will receive its portion of reward or puniſhment in a world to come. When their religion is at ſtake nothing intimidates them, and they ſupport the moſt excruciating torments with a fortitude that aſtoniſhes all beholders. It is not unfrequent to ſee them beat their head againſt a wall till the bone is laid bare of fleſh: ſome, having faſtened a rope to the branch of a tree, paſs a hook, which is at the end of it, into the fleſh under the ribs, and in this ſituation ſwing themſelves for hours together; others, placing their head under the

wheel of a cart, voluntarily ſuffer it to be cruſhed in honour of the firſt Bramins, who were martyrs to their faith.

The common people adore the different attributes of the Divinity as ſo many diſtinct beings; but the more learned Bramins believe in one God, of whom they entertain the ſublimeſt ideas.

The Gentoos practiſe burning their dead, and widows frequently throw themſelves into the funeral pile of their deceaſed huſbands. There is no certain account of the riſe of this ſtrange cuſtom. Some authors pretend that the women in a former age were ſuſpected of poiſoning their huſbands, and were compelled to burn themſelves; ſo that the life of the wife depending after this upon that of the huſband, they might be deterred from that crime: it is certain that no means more efficacious could have been imagined to prevent ſo horrid a practiſe. But in this caſe every widow muſt have been compelled to make this dreadful

ſacrifice. It is however an action entirely optional; and, though highly meritorious, may yet be diſpenſed with.

I am therefore diſpoſed to think that this account, which is ſupported by hiſtorical fact, is nothing but a mere hypotheſis to account for a cuſtom not only ſingular but very aſtoniſhing. Yet how ſhall we account for the natural timidity of the ſex being capable of a voluntary ſacrifice of ſo dreadful a nature? In anſwer to this queſtion I ſhould ſay that love is a great principle of action in all animated nature; that it is particularly powerful in women; and, above all, in Indian women: it is by no means impoſſible that ſome young bride, deprived on a ſudden of the object of her affections, when ſhe had reached the ſummit of her wiſhes, may have thrown herſelf into the funeral pile of her huſband whoſe loſs ſhe could not ſurvive, and with whom ſhe expected to enjoy that happineſs

happineſs in heaven of which ſhe had taſted but imperfectly on earth. This ſacrifice would naturally excite the higheſt admiration, and the victim be looked upon by the ſpectators as a pattern of female perfection: after one example, other women, either pretending to particular virtue, or deſirous of removing ſuſpicions injurious to their fame, may have been induced to devote themſelves in a ſimilar manner. The men, jealous even beyond the grave, may have countenanced this barbarous cuſtom; and if the prieſts held forth any peculiar reward in heaven for ſuch acts of conjugal heroiſm, many widows may have been tempted to follow an example ſo honourable in the eyes of men, and ſo meritorious in the ſight of the Divinity. It is certain that at this day the Gentoo clergy countenance and encourage this unnatural practice.

The ceremony is performed in the following manner. As ſoon as the

body of the deceaſed is laid on the funeral pile, the woman who has devoted herſelf is informed of it, and ſets out for the place attended by a numerous company of prieſts, and by all her relations, who either ſing and pray, or extol the virtue and fortitude of the widow, encouraging her at the ſame time by the example of many famous women, to ſupport the pains of death with pious reſolution. When ſhe has reached the ſpot where ſhe is to act the laſt ſcene of this dreadful tragedy, ſhe embraces her relations and takes her laſt farewell: having aſcended the pile, and graſped the body of her deceaſed huſband in her arms, ſhe ſets fire herſelf to the fatal wood. This is the critical moment of glory or of infamy: for it ſometimes happens that the flames of the pile extinguiſh thoſe of love:—celeſtial joys, the admiration of men, the love of glory; all give way to more natural ſentiments, and earth is preferred to heaven: our

heroine

heroine quits the poſt of honour, and leaves her dear huſband alone to the conſuming fire. The prieſts, who are aware of the frailty of human nature, and are ſolicitous that the victim ſhould not diſgrace herſelf by preferring a life of infamy to a glorious death, ſurround the burning pile, and with great forks endeavour to force her into the flames, that ſhe may be tranſlated from this mortal and imperfect ſtate to one of complete unalterable happineſs.

I forgot to mention a ſect of beggars, who were held in great veneration all over India. They pretend to excel the reſt of men by their piety and by their voluntary poverty; and to ſupport theſe pretenſions by publick proof, they, in the face of the people, perform very long acts of devotion with an appearance of great fervour, concealing at the ſame time under their tattered clothing ſums of money they have accumulated

by the charity of credulous and well-diſpoſed perſons. Tippoo is ſaid to have played theſe a pleaſant trick during the laſt war: he invited the holy mumpers to his table, and after dinner informed them that he had long felt for their ſituation; that he was diſtreſſed to ſee the moſt pious men of his dominions living in filth and miſery while thouſands of worthleſs people enjoyed all the comforts of life; that he was determined to remedy ſuch a crying abuſe, and in conſequence had prepared clothes for them ſuitable to the rank he intended they ſhould enjoy in future. He then compelled them to throw off their ragged garments and to put on new ones which lay in readineſs for them; by this exchange he got poſſeſſion of their concealed gold to the amount of many thouſand pounds ſterling. Theſe ſanctified beggars have pretenſions to the perfect knowledge of futurity,

futurity, and they find many credulous people who have faith in their predictions. They are the only men in the world whom the jealouſy of Eaſtern huſbands will allow to converſe freely with their wives and daughters. In their perſons they are athletic and vigorous; and they never admit any one into their fraternity who has not a comely appearance. The ladies chuſe them as their ſpiritual directors amidſt the dangers and ſin with which they are ſurrounded in this world: ſcandal, however, inſinuates that they privately indulge themſelves in pleaſures not very conſiſtent with the auſterity they affect in publick. Whatever may really be the caſe, it is indubitable that the Indian ladies ſhew them great attention, and even behave to them with greater tenderneſs than to their huſbands. Whenever the ſervice of this pious brotherhood is in queſtion they are never

ſparing of their purſes. Theſe Saints do not always appear on the great ſtage of the world. They ſometimes retire for whole months to lament (as they ſay themſelves) over the ſin and folly of man; and to obtain by their prayers and mortifications a more intimate communication with the Divinity. But profane ſcoffers, who always ſcandalize the ſaints, aſſert that they are deteſtable hypocrites: that, inſtead of ſeeking to raiſe themſelves above the frailties of human nature by faſting and prayer, they retire to great caverns hollowed out by the hand of Nature in thoſe lofty mountains which ſeparate Hindoſtan from the reſt of the world, and there diſſipate in luxury and debauchery immenſe riches; that their whole time is ſpent in laughing at the credulity of men; that he who can boaſt of the greateſt number of roguiſh feats is elected their chief; and that when

they

they have expended all their ſecret ſtores they iſſue from their retreat to practice again their impoſtures upon the world.

The Gentoos of the higheſt caſt always paint their bodies and faces as a mark of diſtinction. They appear in publick with collars of gold and ſilver about their neck, and with rings of the ſame metals on their arms, legs, toes: their ear-rings are three or four inches in diameter. The women of the ſame caſt paint their faces and eye-brows, and wear rings in their noſe, which to a ſtranger excites ſome diſguſt, but the eye is ſoon familiarized to the cuſtom, and a black mouth not ſet off by thoſe ornaments has but few attractions. The women of inferior caſts paſs a cocoa-leaf rolled up through a ſmall hole in their ear, which, being uniformly preſſed on all ſides by the elaſtic leaf, is in proceſs

ceſs of time dilated to a very diſagreable ſize.

The ear-rings of the Mahometan women go entirely round the part.

The religion of the Gentoos, like that of the Pythagoreans, does not allow its votaries to feed on the fleſh of animals; the only articles they are permitted to eat are rice, butter, milk, vegetables, and fruits; they uſe butter to exceſs, taking it with every kind of aliment, and drinking it, when melted, like water. It is certainly this fondneſs for butter which has led them to look upon a cow as an animal ſacred, and that to ſuch a degree, that no ſum of money can redeem a man from death who has ſhed its blood. Their proviſions muſt be dreſſed by themſelves, or by cooks of the ſame caſt. I have ſeen a Hindoo, who had not taken food for four or five days, refuſe to eat rice

becauſe

becauſe it had been boiled by a Chriſtian: he was then offered an earthen pot to dreſs ſome for himſelf, but he declared that he would rather ſtarve than eat of any thing which was not prepared in a veſſel made of metal.

LETTER XVIII.

It is at this place that we ſaw, for the firſt time, the *dancing girls* which are ſo much talked of. The accounts given of their beauty and graceful attitudes are highly exaggerated: they are in reality inferior in point of beauty to many other women of the country; and in their dancing I was not able to diſcover the leaſt grace or elegance of motion. In public they always confine themſelves within the bounds of decency, but in private they throw themſelves into the moſt laſcivious poſtures. If their deſign is to excite deſire, they certainly miſtake the means; I never ſaw their dances without feeling the greateſt diſguſt. The graces diſappear, the loves extinguiſh their torches, and break

break their ſhafts, when women depart from that amiable modeſty which is the greateſt ornament of the ſex. Modeſty is the Ceſtus of Venus, and muſt be aſſumed by all thoſe who expect to win the hearts of men. Dancing women were known in the Eaſt from the remoteſt antiquity: alluſions are made to them in the Holy Scriptures as well as in the Odyſſey of Homer. A cuſtom once eſtabliſhed in this part of the world continues for ever; and it is probable that the dancing girls of this day are ſimilar to thoſe that exiſted four thouſand years ago. While the arts and ſciences are every day receiving ſome improvement in Europe, and human invention is continually tortured in the diſcovery of refinement in taſte and luxury, the Indians quietly continue the ſame exercíſes of induſtry, and the ſame mode of living as their forefathers. It is not at all wonderful that we ſhould be ſuperior to them in many reſpects: but

but is it not aſtoniſhing that they ſhould have manufactures, which, with all our arts and induſtry, we cannot imitate? Many attempts have been made both in France and England to equal their muſlins, but without any ſucceſs. Long before the foundation of Rome they poſſeſſed the art of giving the hardneſs of flint to lime: with this compoſition they made ciſterns, and other veſſels to hold water, as well as prepared it for covering the roofs of their houſes, all as durable as ſtone itſelf. It appears that Nature, who has favoured theſe people in ſo many inſtances, led them to an accidental and immediate diſcovery of thoſe arts which we have acquired after infinite ſtudy and labour. To what perfection might not the Indian artiſts aſpire, if they had the ſame active character, and as ſtrong motives to improve, as Europeans.

The Indians are in general effeminate, lazy, and cowardly; but their vices have been

been with no great reaſon attributed to the effects of the climate in which they live: for if this opinion were juſt, we ſhould trace theſe in the different ſpecies of animals. The tyger, lion, and elephant, would have neither ſtrength nor ferocity, and we Europeans ſhould have ſuffered a change of character immediately on our arrival in this country, which you know has not been the caſe. The Britiſh troops on ſervice in India, have diſplayed more courage than thoſe who were employed in other quarters. It is therefore certain that it is not any quality of the climate which diſpoſes the Hindoos to the vices they are accuſed of. If you ſhould peruſe Dow's Hiſtory of Hindoſtan, you would be aſtoniſhed at the inſtances recorded of the courage, reſolution, and activity, of the great men who reſided at the courts of the Emperors. You will ſee that they have often taken up arms againſt their ſovereigns, bearing up with invincible ſpirit againſt every

danger and every difficulty, and riſing after the misfortune of a defeat with greater luſtre than before: that the women, forgetful of the weakneſs of their ſex, have braved all the dangers of war; have exhorted their huſbands to act like brave men, and threatened to repudiate them if they betrayed the leaſt diſpoſition to ſhrink from their purpoſe. In the laſt war M. De Buſſy laid ſiege to a fortreſs which was defended only by a Nabob and ſome of his moſt faithful attendants: the walls of the place were ſoon battered to pieces, and the French General gave orders to ſtorm; but when his troops attempted the aſſault they were repulſed on every ſide. The beſieged Prince continued to make many vain efforts, but finding that he muſt at laſt yield to ſuperior numbers, he ſhut up his women in an apartment, to which he ſet fire, ſtabbing all thoſe that attempted to eſcape: after this ſhocking maſſacre he and his guards mutually put each other to death. When M. De

Buſſy

Buſſy entered the fort he witneſſed theſe brave men weltering in their blood, and all of them dead except the Nabob's ſon, who had not received any mortal wound. Theſe examples of determined courage, which reſemble ſome anecdotes we read in ancient hiſtory, are very frequent in this country, and can only proceed from a daring and intrepid character, ſuch as we phlegmatic Europeans do not imagine to exiſt in human nature.

It is not only in war or in the mechanic arts that the Hindoos are worthy of admiration: you are already appriſed that they are capable of ſupporting the ſevereſt fatigues. The palanquin bearers travel nine or ten leagues a day, expoſed to the ſcorching beams of the ſun: our ſpies on any urgent occaſion will run fifteen or ſixteen leagues between morning and night. In the city of Calcutta the Sircars and Dubaſhes take no repoſe either by night or day, if they have any trifling advantage in view. What ex-

treme labour do the loweſt caſts undergo when they follow our armies! Each man carries regularly every day a burthen of ſixty pounds weight. The painful penances the Indians impoſe on themſelves from motives of religion, the long and haſty marches taken by the begging religious in the performance of their pilgrimages, the death of whole garriſons who ſlay themſelves with their own hands rather than yield to be conquered; the reſolution with which we have ſeen young and beautiful females rid themſelves of the load of life after the loſs of their honour; all theſe particulars prove to a demonſtration that the people of Hindoſtan are capable of the moſt heroic actions.

There are neither profeſſors, doctors, nor univerſities, in India. The Hindoos do not paſs their youth under the tuition of maſters, and yet there are many of them who poſſeſs very extenſive knowledge. Their poets and hiſtorians are held

held in the higheſt eſteem. The art of calculating eclipſes, which ſuppoſes an acquaintance with Geometry, Trigonometry, Conic Sections, Logarithms, Algebra; in a word, with all the branches of mathematical ſcience, has been long known here; and it is perhaps from this people, for whom we affect ſuch ſovereign contempt, that the Egyptians, and after them the Greeks, drew thoſe ſciences, which have been tranſmitted to us, and of which we are ſo vain.

You know in how much veneration the Gymnoſophiſts were held in the ages of antiquity; the great diſciple of Ariſtotle viſited them during his expedition in India, and received the moſt ſatisfactory anſwers to the queſtions he put to them reſpecting the art of government. Hyder-Ally, after murdering his benefactor and ridding himſelf of all the lawful heirs to the crown of the Myſore, contrived to ſecure himſelf on the throne of that kingdom, to enlarge his dominions, and to

leave them at his death to his ſon Tippoo. If we conſider how much many rightful ſovereigns have toiled to maintain themſelves only in their juſt rights, we muſt at once acknowledge that this uſurper, who raiſed himſelf from the condition of a private ſoldier to that of a great monarch, muſt have poſſeſſed an uncommon extent of genius, of knowledge, and of policy.

Cæſar and Cromwell both uſurped the government of their country. They are deſervedly placed in the liſt of great men; but they found, each of them, in the circumſtances of their ſituation, and the vices of their time, many reſources which Hyder wanted. Cæſar was at the head of a victorious army; and Cromwell took advantage of the licentiouſneſs of his countrymen, and their diſguſt at the tyranny and abuſes of a monarchical government. But it does not appear that Hyder drew any aſſiſtance from ought but his own genius. He has left behind

behind him a ſon who treads in his foot-ſteps, and who is likely to make the greateſt powers in the world to feel the force of his arms.

Shall we pronounce univerſally on a country which produces ſuch men, that it is incapable of riſing above ſtupidity and meanneſs? certainly not: we ſhould rather acknowledge that Nature, uniformly impartial and beneficent, has fitted her favourite man to attain equally in all the different temperatures of climate, the higheſt perfection of which his Nature is capable.

Things excellent in themſelves are frequently corrupted by an alloy of evil. The political conſtitution of the Hindoos, though it might have been originally good, is become the moſt unjuſt and deſpotic in the world. An able legiſlature is wanting to put the government on its ancient footing, which would render the natives a wiſe, active, and enterpriſing people. They have not, like

like the people of Europe, labour and difficulties to encounter in order to procure the neceſſaries of life. The earth produces every requiſite almoſt without culture. The Lacedemonians employed ſlaves for the tillage of their lands, and treated them with great barbarity. But here Nature, performing the office of the ſlave, diſpenſes, with a kind and liberal hand, thoſe fruits of the earth which the Helots reluctantly brought to their maſters. This conſideration ought certainly to operate on the manners of the Hindoos, and inſpire them with gentleneſs and humanity.

This is, in my judgment, the only difference between them and the Europeans which can be attributed to the effects of climate. If they are inferior to us, that inferiority muſt not be laid to the account of phyſical cauſes, but to the barbarous deſpotiſm which has entirely broken their ſpirit. If a republican government ſhould ariſe in the country

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and emancipate the people, if it ſhould diſtribute publick employments among men of real merit, without regard to birth or riches, the prejudices and indolence which, as it were, keep this part of the world in bondage, would be ſpeedily diſſipated. If the magiſtrates and great were to encourage men of letters, it is probable that in the number of perſons whom the mildneſs of the climate exempts from labour, many might be found whoſe love of the Sciences might be attended with the happieſt ſucceſs. What pleaſure would the philoſopher enjoy in contemplating their progreſs to that knowledge which it has coſt us ſo much pains to acquire: to ſee them make the ſame diſcoveries which have immortalized others, and at laſt be able to rectify *our* errors, and remove *our* prejudices.

I am aware that ſuch a change could not be effected without great difficulty, and that cuſtoms which have ſubſiſted

for many thouſand years could not all at once be broken; but however arduous the taſk may be, it is not impoſſible. If Licurgus had confined himſelf to the tranſmitting to poſterity the plan of his government, without carrying it into execution, he would have ranked in the liſt of Utopian politicians, and no one would have admitted the practicability of his ideas.

Every thing is poſſible to genius and perſeverance. A ſucceſſion of able governors, as would eaſily be found in England, might diſpenſe happineſs throughout our poſſeſſions in the Eaſt, ſecure the affection of the natives, and put our power on ſuch a footing as not to be ſhaken. The means they would take to effect this object would be, to proſcribe ſuch cuſtoms as are prejudicial to the people, to make every man ſecure of his property, to remove by degrees the diſgraceful diſtinctions of the caſts, and in proportion as knowledge and

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more rational cuſtoms ſhould be introduced into the country, to enact ſuitable laws. Much time and labour would be required to effect ſo compleat a change: the bulk of the people, debaſed by their former condition, would at firſt be intoxicated with their happineſs, and fall into the licentiouſneſs which hiſtory ſhows all nations are diſpoſed to when they paſs rapidly from a ſtate of ſlavery and oppreſſion to one of liberty and good government.

The Hindoos are ſuppoſed to have a livelier imagination than the inhabitants of Europe: you know how much a great philoſopher has puzzled his brains to find reaſons for the ſupport of this hypotheſis: he has advanced that great heat expands the extremities of the nerves, and fits men to receive a number of ſlight impreſſions, and that this conſtitutes a livèly imagination. It would be equally reaſonable to ſay that heat parches up the organs of feeling, and occaſions

occaſions that ſtupidity and torpor of mind which have prevented the Hindoos from equalling us in the arts and ſciences. Would it not have been more in the ſtyle of ſuch a philoſopher as Monteſquieu to have accounted for the diſtinctions of the characters of nations by the differences in their government? In England, politicks, morals, and religion, are all open to our inveſtigation; our thoughts are ſolely occupied by objects within the reach of reaſon, which alone limit all our ſpeculations. But it is otherwiſe with the poor Hindoos. They are accuſtomed from their infancy to tremble at the name of the ſovereign, or at the ſight of a Bramin, or any man of a ſuperior caſt, and dare not indulge in the leaſt reflection concerning theſe important perſonages. The exerciſe of their reaſon being thus reſtrained their only reſource is in their imagination; they are taught by the habit of conſidering every one above them as partaking of

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the eſſence of the Divinity, and would be eaſily led to fall down and worſhip him. This diſpoſition is favoured by the aſtoniſhing phenomena preſented to them by the climate: dreadful peals of thunder, hurricanes that threaten the overthrow of the higheſt mountains; rains which deluge the country like a ſecond flood: in addition to theſe may be reckoned the immenſe rivers that flow with a majeſtic courſe over wide extended plains; a vigorous and inexhauſtible vegetation; trees whoſe tops touch the clouds, and ſend forth branches which ſtrike root into the ground, ſtrengthening and ſupporting the parent tree: (all India would be over-run with the multitude of theſe auxiliary plants were they not checked by the browzing of animals.) Such a number and variety of ſtupendous objects muſt neceſſarily make a lively impreſſion on their imaginations, and the more ſo as they are not allowed to exerciſe any other power of their minds.

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The Hindoo women marry at the age of ten or twelve years; we every day ſee them in a ſtate of pregnancy; as ſoon as they are delivered their offſpring engages all their care, whom they ſuckle while circumſtances permit, and, without attending to themſelves, take every precaution to inſure the health and vigour of their conſtitution. The length of time they ſuckle their children occaſions ſome deformity in their breaſts, and they acknowledge it. But they have no ambition but to pleaſe their huſbands, and leave their country citizens capable of ſupporting all the hardſhips their lot may expoſe them to.

Such is the conduct of women whom you call ſavages, becauſe they go naked and are of a dark complexion. Let us compare them with our handſome and polite Europeans; who often, for the ſake of fortune, without any conſideration for the duties which the ſtate impoſes,

poſes, engage in matrimony. When one of theſe ladies has brought a child into the world it is conſigned to the care of a mercenary nurſe, in whoſe hands it remains till it is of an age to be no inconvenience to its lovely mother. I do not, however, blame the mothers; they are not calculated to follow the dictates of nature, their pleaſures being of another kind. In fact the cares of a family would keep them at home, wither the roſe and lily of their cheeks, and deſtroy the ſymetry of their charming boſoms. In that caſe all would be loſt, and their golden dreams of conqueſt vaniſh into air. What ſubſtitute could be found for a beautiful breaſt, a fine ſhape, a brilliant complexion? Where would they find arms to maintain their empire over that crowd of adorers who are kept in ſubmiſſion by a ſingle glance?

Superficial obſervers, who have ſeen proſtitutes in the capital cities of Hindoſtan,

doſtan, ſimilar to what are ſeen every where, have unjuſtly concluded that the Indian women have a warmth of conſtitution which renders them incapable of the virtue of continence. But I cannot believe that women, whoſe ſpirits are diſſipated by continual and exceſſive perſpiration, are liable to ſuch violent deſires.

I muſt acknowledge that it is a prodigy for a woman to preſerve her chaſtity when ſhe is alone with a man: but this is to be attributed leſs to the influence of the climate than to that of the prevailing religion, cuſtoms, and manners. The Hindoo religion puts no reſtraint on carnal deſires. The women are brought up in the notion, that they are born for no other purpoſe than to become mothers, and they are eſteemed in proportion to the number of citizens they produce. Intimacy between a man and a woman of the ſame caſt is held to be blameleſs. Now what motive could

could the ſex have to reſtrain an inclination which is forbidden by no precept, moral or divine? When religion forbids they are inexorable; of this every day furniſhes abundant proof. As an example of their reſolution, I will relate an incident which is generally known and credited. A Nabob poſſeſſed himſelf of the ſeraglio of a neighbouring prince whom he had conquered. Captivated by the beauty of his predeceſſor's favourite, a young woman fifteen years old, endowed with all the graces and charms of her ſex, he determined to triumph over her fidelity. After trying in vain all the arts of the moſt perſuaſive and ſeducing eloquence, he reſolved to ſeize by force what he had been unable to obtain by intreaties. The victim was led to the apartment of her maſter, ſeemingly not averſe to yield to his tranſports, but at the very moment when he thought to enjoy the moſt ſupreme delight, ſhe

plunged a dagger into his boſom—the juſt reward of ſo odious an outrage.

Such examples of virtue are not unfrequent among the women of India; eaſy of acceſs to men of their own caſt, to whom their indulgence is often a duty enjoined by their law, they will ſuffer any extremity rather than grant the leaſt favour to a man of another, or of a different religion. This by the bye is a proof that the ideas of virtue and vice are not the ſame in all places, and that they differ according to the laws, religion, and prejudices of each country.

If my BRILLIANT TALENTS could procure me ſome high office in this country, I think I ſhould perform wonders. I would change the character of the people, and make them ſurpaſs in dignity of ſentiment the reſt of the world, as much as the rivers and mountains of India exceed thoſe of Great Britain. The King of England ſhould quit

quit his European dominions to reign over Hindoſtan; and all the Eaſt, as a reward for my rare talents, ſhould joyfully pay him homage. I ſuppoſe you think me a boaſter; in your ear I am ready to acknowledge any thing, but in publick I will maintain that I am right. I have known ſo many perſons advance themſelves by their ſelf-importance, that I will take no joke on the ſubject; and if a gaſconnade ſhould obtain for me a Government in India, will you not allow that I know in what manner to turn things to my advantage?

LETTER XIX.

THOUGH I have given but a ſlight account of the Hindoos, it will be ſufficient to convince you that their cuſtoms and manners are very different from ours: hence it follows that laws which are excellent in England, would (at leaſt in many reſpects) be abſurd in Hindoſtan. It is ſurpriſing that the Parliament of England ſhould have attempted to eſtabliſh a Court of Judicature, with power to put the Engliſh laws in force throughout our territories in this part of the world. If we judge of the merit of mens actions by their intentions, we cannot but praiſe the benevolence of that great aſſembly, which had no other motive to interfere in the internal government of Hindoſtan, than the deſire of placing the liberty of the inhabitants on the broad and ſecure baſis of poſitive law. To me it

appears ſtrange that the wiſeſt men of the Britiſh nation ſhould have committed ſo great a miſtake in the art of government. If the manners of the Hindoos had been congenial with our own, ſtill our laws would not be found ſuitable for them: indeed legal regulations, calculated for a perfect republic, are not at all proper for men who are accuſtomed to ſtoop under the yoke of an unjuſt and deſpotic government, and who are void of all ſentiments of honour publick or private. Knaves always find ſome ſubterfuge to eſcape the rigour of the laws, which, not providing againſt every poſſible mode of injuſtice, ſuffer a great number of miſdemeanours to go unpuniſhed. Frequent reference muſt therefore be made to the eſtabliſhed manners and opinions of a people, to ſupply the deficiencies of a written code. But the popular cuſtoms of India have ſuffered much from the miſtaken bounty of our Parliament; and it is to this cauſe that

the great depopulation obſerved in our Eaſtern poſſeſſions is generally attributed. The Supreme Court was originally inveſted with abſolute power: it was a court of equity, like the Chancery in England, and at the ſame time competent to hold ſeſſions of oyer and terminer and gaol delivery. Such a ſyſtem was not very conſiſtent with the intention of Parliament to give freedom to the Hindoos; for it united in the ſame ſet of men all the powers of the moſt complete deſpotiſm. This court ſitting at Calcutta, ſummoned to its bar the inhabitants of our moſt diſtant ſettlements, and took the moſt grievous methods to compel their appearance. Its warrants authoriſed a ſearch for offenders wherever they might be ſuſpected of concealing themſelves; and the privacies of the Zenana, which had in all times been held ſacred, was violated by the officers of the court. Women, who, till then, had not been required to appear

pear in court, and who had never unveiled themſelves but to their huſbands, were compelled to appear in publick to give their evidence before this omnipotent tribunal.

The Supreme Court was no ſooner eſtabliſhed in Calcutta, than many of our moſt faithful ſubjects departed with all their effects to put themſelves under the protection of another government. The Governor General and Council obſerving the increaſing frequency of theſe voluntary exiles, as well as of the murmurs and complaints it excited among the people, uſed their influence at home, and obtained that the juriſdiction of the court ſhould be confined within the limits of the city. It is ſaid that the conduct of the Judges is unimpeachable on the ſcore of juſtice and impartiality.

What a dreadful idea muſt you have of the ſervants of the Company, if you take your opinion of them from the ſpeeches of the members of the Houſe

of Commons. Be aſſured that all ſuch accounts of their injuſtice and cruelty are either falſe or greatly exaggerated, and that they act with as much gentleneſs as their ſituation allows. Some ſuperficial obſervers, who had ſeen an under-renter flogged by order of a reſident for refuſing to pay his tribute, were greatly aſtoniſhed. Full of European ideas of government, and ſtruck with horror at the ſcene, without reflecting on the occaſion of it, they returned home ready to relate the moſt pitiful ſtories of our cruelty to the Hindoos. They found no difficulty in communicating their ſentiments to the whole Engliſh nation, and ſo much affected the feelings of many members of parliament, that they have declaimed openly againſt the cruelty and oppreſſive government exerciſed by the Company's officers. But if theſe gentlemen had paid the ſmalleſt attention to the Indian character, they would have ſaved themſelves all this trouble; they would have found that the

Hindoos are not to be brought to reaſon by any but coercive meaſures, and that they are ſo fond of money that nothing but blows can extort from them the rent of their lands. If you ſtate your claims to an Indian with a gentle aſpect, he laughs at them; but if you ſhew him a ſtick, and make his ſhoulders ſenſible of the weight of it, he preſently pays you the ſum you have a right to demand. Before we were maſters of the country, I am told that a Nabob was obliged to hang one of his renters before the man's family could be prevailed upon to pay his rent.

It is poſſible that ſome injuſtice may ſometimes be committed towards theſe under-renters; but it can hardly be avoided. The method of collecting the revenues is ſo complex, and ſo unlike any followed in Europe, that thoſe Europeans who have reſided the longeſt in India are ſtill ignorant how to proceed in it. The native collectors whom we em-

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ploy are obliged to make uſe of means to procure the rents, which, as I underſtand, are often oppreſſive to their countrymen. The ſervants of the Company do every thing in their power to check ſuch practices, but they will never be able totally to prevent them till they can take the buſineſs of the collection on themſelves.

Mr. Pitt's Bill for the better ordering the Company's affairs has been lately tranſmitted to India. The Engliſh inhabitants are much diſguſted with it, and it has occaſioned an univerſal ferment in their minds. If the clauſe that requires a declaration upon oath of the property of every individual who returns to Europe, is not repealed, the people talk of nothing leſs than a rebellion. This law is certainly very unjuſt and directly contrary to the ſpirit of the Engliſh conſtitution:—it would be worthy of a Tippoo Sultan Bahader.

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When a free nation has recourſe to ſuch arbitrary acts, it ought to have ſome conſiderable advantages in view; but I do not ſee that any ſuch can reſult from the bill in queſtion. What end is it to anſwer? To prevent oppreſſion?—But an honeſt man may acquire a large fortune, while a villain may return to Europe without a ſhilling. Let it, however, be granted that we accumulate money in proportion to our knavery: will a man, who has enriched himſelf by unworthy means, be bound by the form of an oath? Or, if he ſhould have any ſcruple to go through ſuch a ceremony, may he not retire to a country which is out of the reach of our laws, where foreigners will receive the benefit of thoſe riches of which the ſubject has robbed the Britiſh ſettlements?

The reſtrictions impoſed on the Governor and Council are no leſs extraordinary. Men who are upon the ſpot are better judges of the expediency of any meaſure,

meaſure, than thoſe who are two or three thouſand leagues diſtant. The Company may chuſe Governors from among the civil officers who are in their ſervice, whoſe abilities are known, and whoſe judgment may be depended upon in the moſt critical circumſtances. The Company has alſo the power of recalling them if they ſhould prove unworthy of their office; ſo that no Governor could do much miſchief before he would be diveſted of his authority. It is ſaid that theſe abſurd reſtrictions are intended to prevent the Company from being drawn into a troubleſome war; but for this purpoſe they are totally ineffectual; for war muſt neceſſarily be very ſoon declared in our ſettlements. Tippoo, who is well acquainted with the advantages of diſcipline and good order, is uſing his utmoſt efforts to put his army in condition to take the field and be on a par with ours. When he has accompliſhed his purpoſe, the fall of our oriental power

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is not far diſtant. Our revenue is conſiderably greater than his; but our diſburſements exceed his. The ſubſiſtence of his troops is a very ſmall expence; for he lays ſo heavy a tax on the markets that follow his army that almoſt the whole of his ſoldiers pay returns immediately into his own coffers. In reality, what is called PAY in his ſervice, is no more than a loan, which returns in a ſhort time to the lender.

Though the dealers who ſupply the Britiſh troops are likewiſe ſubject to very high duties, no part of our pay reverts into the hands of the Company; becauſe the whole of this impoſt is the perquiſite of the officer commanding. The ſame practice obtains in every other department of our government. Though the Company's officers receive emoluments twenty times greater than thoſe of Tippoo, yet the commandants of our armies make no ſcruple of charging twenty or thirty thouſand pounds *per annum* under the

the deſcription of money paid for ſecret ſervices; though their diſburſements on that account do not exceed two hundred. A commiſſary will bring forward a demand of fifty or a hundred thouſand pounds for articles which he has not even thought of purchaſing; and an engineer, who has laid a few boards over a ſtream, makes the ſame charge in his accounts as if he had conſtructed a magnificent bridge.

Theſe impoſitions are not ſecretly practiſed; but thoſe who are at the head of the Company's affairs are convinced of the neceſſity of tempting people into the ſervice by the proſpect of a rapid fortune, ſhut their eyes to the abuſe, and pay, without heſitation, all demands which bear the ſmalleſt appearance of being juſt. On the other hand, if any of Tippoo's officers have wronged him of a farthing, no interceſſion can preſerve the life of the delinquent.

If the Nabob of the Myſore has already ſuch great advantages over us in the proſecution of a war, what will be our ſituation when his troops have been diſciplined with almoſt as much regularity as our own?—We muſt, to a certainty, be entirely ruined! To prevent this diſaſter, our only expedient is to cruſh Tippoo before he is able to carry his ſchemes into execution. Not a moment ſhould be loſt; and if the Company have not credit ſufficient to raiſe the neceſſary funds, money ſhould be advanced by the nation. I am aware that the national debt is already of a burthenſome amount; but it would be better to increaſe it by a few millions, than to loſe the richeſt and moſt flouriſhing part of the Britiſh dominions.

As the French troops muſt, in conſequence of the peace, neceſſarily quit Tippoo's ſervice, nothing could be more eaſy, if we were once determined on the meaſure, than to give an irremediable wound

wound to his riſing power. An army of twelve thouſand foot and four or five thouſand horſe might invade his territory in the Carnatic, while another corps of five or ſix thouſand men might diſembark on the coaſt of Malabar. Theſe two bodies, well ſupplied, and commanded by brave, enterpriſing, and active officers, might, in a very ſhort time, ſcour his whole country, without meeting with any oppoſition but from irregular and ill-diſciplined troops, who are diſpirited by a ſingle check, and never rally if they are cloſely purſued. The fortified places would offer but little reſiſtance; as far as Seringapatam there is not one that would not be evacuated on the firſt appearance of an enemy, and that place would not make any long defence. Thence to Chitteldrough (the ſcene of my *happineſs and glory*) there is not a ſingle fort. Here the troops of Bombay might join in the expedition; thoſe brave men will always find it an eaſy taſk to force

force the paſſes, when they are defended only by black ſoldiers.

According to this plan nothing would be eaſier than to obtain poſſeſſion of almoſt the whole peninſula of India. I am ſo confident of the ſucceſs of this ſcheme, that, notwithſtanding my great averſion to ſea voyages, I would cheerfully embark again from Europe to aſſiſt in the execution of it.

This, probably, is the laſt letter I ſhall write to you from India; we expect to ſail homeward in a very ſhort time. I entertain no ſmall apprehenſion that our paſſage will not be ſo agreeable as we had reaſon to expect. Some time ago the Council determined that no more than three or four officers ſhould embark on board one ſhip; a regulation very favourable to our comfort: but, from ſome unaccountable caprice, a lady, who is neither ill-humoured nor paſt the age of being admired, has applied to Mr. S. one of the members, to ſolicit the Coun-

oil that no King's officer may be allowed to take his paſſage on board the ſhip that is to carry her to Europe. This gentleman, always ready to ſhew his gallantry, even at the expence of ******* procured the firſt order of Council to be revoked, and in conſequence of a new arrangement, twenty or thirty officers are to be ſtowed in one ſhip, without a ſingle lady to be the object of their care and complaiſance; without a ſmile or a word of encouragement from a pretty mouth, to ſhorten the tedioufneſs, and compenſate for the unpleaſantneſs, of ſo long a voyage. I do not yet know whether it is my lot to take my paſſage on board this unlucky ſhip, but I much fear it will be the caſe.

LETTER XX.

Calcutta, April 15, 1785.

I MAKE no doubt that you think it ſtrange I ſhould be pleaſant on the moſt ſerious ſubjects. Have not your brows contracted into a frown at the freedom of ſome of the deſcriptions contained in my letters? Have you been able to bear with patience that I ſhould have only ridiculed commanders who have tarniſhed the glory of the Britiſh nation by their indolence, luxury, and avarice; who inconſiderately threw away the lives of ſo many brave men, and brought upon us ſuch evils as cannot even be deſcribed, without ſhocking all feeling minds? Have I not aſſumed too bold a tone when I have treated of ſubjects which exerciſe the docility of our

religious faith? Will not the women and men of a certain country be ſcandalized at ſome paſſages in my journal?

Whatever may be the caſe, I know the uprightneſs of my own heart. Though at all times the zealous friend and partizan of virtue, I did not think myſelf called upon to be melancholy becauſe others were vicious or abſurd; my cup is already ſufficiently bitter, without adding to it the wormwood of ſpontaneous ill humour. All the grimace of ſorrow would be of little avail in altering the ſtate of the nation; beſides, there is a ſufficient number of thoſe who will lament its preſent ſituation, and regret its former ſplendour.

I have no where made uſe of expreſſions which ſhould raiſe a bluſh on the face of a ſenſible woman: of the facts I have related I had the moſt poſitive proof; and ſuch was the humour of

my

my mind, at that time, that I rather preferred exciting ſmiles than ſadneſs.

The way in which I have treated idolatry cannot, I ſhould think, be offenſive to a good Chriſtian: truths, proved by reaſon and by ſcripture, can ſuffer no injury from the pen of a young officer. The religious creed of a ſenſible man is too well eſtabliſhed to be ſhaken by any but the ſoundeſt and moſt convincing arguments. I am beſides as humble a ſon of the church in my red coat, as if I was a profeſſed devotee.

You was yourſelf formerly fond of a little pleaſantry, and if it is true that letters are a faithful picture of the mind, you are ſtill of the ſame diſpoſition; but as you had occaſional fits of gravity, and may, perhaps, not be pleaſed that my epiſtles ſhould always be written in the ſame vein, I am now going to give you ſome ſpeculations that are rather of a more ſerious nature. I was not ſo

much diſ-ſpirited by my confinement, but that I found amuſement in reflecting on the objects that were always before my eyes. Thoſe diſguſting vermin, whoſe very name excites a nauſea, have often made me forget the pain of their bite, by the attentive curioſity they occaſioned as to the ſource from whence ſo prodigious a number of them could proceed; for we were haraſſed by them night and day, though the greateſt part of our time was ſpent in deſtroying them. I found, however, great difficulty in proſecuting my ſpeculations. The belief that Nature has but one proceſs for the production of animated beings puzzled me for a conſiderable time. We are told that nothing living can be produced but by the conjunction of male and female; and that the opinion of the ancients, that animals are engendered by putrefaction, is a mere fable, founded in credulity, and which in theſe times has been confuted upon demonſtrative

ſtrative proof, that animals are only produced by other animals of the ſame kind. I have known you adopt this theory after the modern philoſophers.

A few facts, which are conſtantly recurring before our eyes, have given me ſuſpicions that the ancients were right, and we moderns erroneous in our judgment. If in this country you hang up a piece of meat, in ſpite of all the care you can take, the flies will depoſit their ordure upon it; worms will be bred, and in a ſhort time the whole maſs will appear alive. If you ſhut up fat cheeſe cloſe from the acceſs of all inſects from without, it will be ſoon full of maggots. The bodies of children are beds in which theſe vermin are produced in abundance. Worms are found in the ſkin of living animals, and this is a fact known to every peaſant. I do not think that any one will pretend that theſe inſects have been generated by other inſects, or that they are produced from eggs lodged in

the meat; for in that caſe flies and not maggots would have appeared: at any rate, however, there is no room for any ſuch hypotheſis with regard to the cheeſe, or the ſkin of living animals. I omitted telling you that if the Polypus be cut into ſeveral pieces, and thrown into the water, each of the ſeparate parts becomes a perfect Polypus.

To this ſimple experiment, which is within every body's reach, you may add thoſe which are aſſiſted by the microſcope. With the aid of this inſtrument you will obſerve in the ſeed of animals an infinite number of animalculæ, which, from their conſtant motion, are evidently alive. If you put one of theſe ſpermatic worms, as ſome authors call them, into a drop of water, you diſcover that it was a cluſter of animalculæ, ſo inconceivably ſmall, that (as we are informed by ſome philoſophers) more than fifty thouſand of them would be neceſſary to make up an atom equal in

ſize

ſize to the ſmalleſt grain of duſt. The ſtamina of flowers, the juices of meat, when examined by the microſcope, offer the ſame phenomena to the eye of the obſerver.

Is not this enough to convince a ſenſible man that matter conſiſts of living particles in their higheſt ſtate of diviſibility, and that theſe particles, or firſt principles of life, cannot be deſtroyed? Admitting this inconteſtible truth, the myſtery of generation, which has hitherto been involved in impenetrable darkneſs, appears eaſy to be underſtood. All bodies, from the coarſeſt earth to the moſt perfect animal, are abſolutely of the ſame matter: their ſenſible differences are owing to the various manner in which the ſtrata of their component particles are placed, The fluid, ejected by the male, is drawn from the animal or vegetable food which he has taken; it is his fleſh; his blood in a fluid ſtate. In the act, one or more of the living

atoms

atoms are ſeparated by the ſhock, and paſs into the matrix of the female, where they ſwim in a proper liquid, or are diſ-engaged from the habit of coheſion by which they were before confined on every ſide; one draws to itſelf all the ſubſtance that ſurrounds it; afterwards it increaſes in ſize, and takes the ſhape of the animal to which it owes its origin.

This ſhort account is ſufficient to allow all the concluſions neceſſary for the eſtabliſhment of the theory. A particle of matter depoſited in a proper receptacle, or freed from the attraction of coheſion, and in a ſituation to abſorb ſuch ſubſtance as is congenial to their organization will there ſwell to a proper ſize, and finally take the form of an animal. Now it is eaſy to conceive that one of theſe detached atoms in the body of a child, in meat, cheeſe, under the ſkin of animals, or on the head of a man, may be lodged in the midſt of matter, which it abſorbs and tranſmutes

into

into its own ſubſtance, and thus becomes a living being.

It not neceſſary here to examine why an animal bears one form rather than another. I had no intention to write a long treatiſe on generation; my only view was to put you in poſſeſſion of ideas, which, though barren in my hands, might in yours produce a demonſtration of the fallacy of all former ſyſtems on that ſubject from the times of Ariſtotle to thoſe of the celebrated Buffon. How much I wiſh to ſee you engage all thoſe formidable champions, and vanquiſh them with weapons which I ſhall have roughly hammered out, but to which you ſhall have given the irreſiſtible temper and edge.

You are acquainted with the deepeſt ſpeculations on matter; to you I owe the advantage of having read the learned labours of Harris on that ſubject. This ingenious author demonſtrates after the ancients that matter paſſes into all bodies

bodies, that it has neither form, colour, nor any ſpecific character; none but negative ideas can be formed of it; one may ſay what it is not, but not what it is. Locke, in his chapter on power, plainly inſinuates that it has an active and a paſſive power. Robinet obſerved animalcules in the ſeed of plants and of men; he is the firſt that diſcovered that the embryo was organiſed and alive in the ſemen.

Many authors have made reſearches into the cauſe of gravity: Is it not reaſonable to ſuppoſe that it is owing to this principle of life, that there could be no tendency to a common centre without this univerſal ſoul? That there is no ſuch thing as poſitive weight, but that this general bond of union which keeps every thing in its place, is infuſed into all ſubſtances, and is ſomething diſtinct from matter?

I have a number of confuſed ideas on this ſubject, which I will communicate

to

to you on my return to Europe. What a wide field is open for our ſpeculations! How much I deſire to ſee you, like another Socrates, aſſiſting the throes of my pregnant mind, and uſhering my thoughts into the world.

LETTER XXI.

Calcutta, May 1, 1785.

I HAVE omitted in my former letters giving you an account of Tippoo's proceedings above the paſſes after he had taken us priſoners: I muſt therefore return to the old ground, and carry you once again among ſieges and battles.

The enemy no ſooner appeared before the paſs than the garriſon of Hyder Gur, ſtruck with a ſudden panick, fled in the greateſt confuſion to Condapore, and communicated their fears like a contagion to the troops of that place: in ſpite of all the exertions of Lieutenant Muirſon, the commanding officer, he could not remove the apprehenſions excited by the daſtardly fugitives in the minds of his men, nor prevent their joining them in croſſing the river and making a pre-

cipitate retreat to Onore. Lieutenant Muirſon, by this defection, being rendered utterly incapable of the leaſt reſiſtance, by the advice of his officers retired likewiſe to Onore.

Fearful that the bad behaviour of his garriſon might injure him in the opinion of the world; highly mortified at being robbed of ſo favourable an opportunity of diſplaying his courage, and diſtreſſed at the idea of ſeeing an enemy poſſeſs themſelves in ſuch a manner of a Fort ſo capable of reſiſtance, as well from the ſtrength of its works as the abundance of its ſtores, Lieutenant Muirſon applied to the commanding officer at Onore, and demanded troops to attempt the retaking of Condapore. About one hundred men were granted to him for this purpoſe; but he had no ſooner entered the mouth of the river than a great number of the enemy, who were poſted on the banks on each ſide, began a heavy fire on his ſmall force. It would

would have been abſurd to attempt a landing under ſuch a diſadvantage; he therefore determined upon an immediate return to Onore. As he was out of the enemy's reach he had nothing to fear from their purpoſes; but unluckily he ſtruck on a ſand bank, where he was obliged to remain till the enemy came down and forced him to capitulate.

The troops at the other paſs ſhewed themſelves to be as brave as thoſe of Hyder Gur were baſe and cowardly. They ſuſtained a number of attacks by ſtorm, till worn out with fatigue, and totally incapable of making head any longer againſt an almoſt innumerable hoſt of enemies, they eſcaped to Caricall. Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, whom I have already mentioned, commanded at this place: he conſidered, with great judgment, that if he kept himſelf obſtinately to the defence of his poſt, he would only accelerate the loſs of our

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former conqueſts, and therefore retired to Mangalore with all the troops under his command.

After the capture of Nagur, Tippoo Sultan ſuppoſed that no garriſon would dare to reſiſt his triumphant arms; he therefore thought it ſufficient to detach his cavalry to intimidate our troops at Mangalore, which is below the paſs, and oblige them to capitulate. But this force, which conceived, like their ſovereign, that the gates of the place would be thrown open on their firſt appearance, were ſo little on their guard that Colonel Campbell ſurpriſed and totally routed them, taking at the ſame time ſeveral pieces of their artillery and a great number of bullocks.*

This inſult inflamed the rage of the great BAHADER: he came down upon Mangalore with his whole army, determined to exterminate the Engliſh and blot out their very name in this part of the world. His ſucceſs was at firſt very

rapid, and victory ſeemed to follow in his rear: our troops were obliged to abandon all their out-poſts and ſhut themſelves up in the fort; but, though the walls were weak, and there were no vaults to ſhelter them from the ſhells, nor many other requiſites to ſuſtain a ſiege, their courage did not faulter, and they threw great obſtacles in the way of his further progreſs. In proceſs of time, however, almoſt all their cannon were diſmounted and their defences battered down. Already had the beſiegers made a lodgment in ſome places of the ditch and covered way, when the news of a peace between England and France reached their camp. The garriſon was at this time reduced to the greateſt extremity; and, with the aſſiſtance of the French, Tippoo muſt infallibly have become maſter of Mangalore; but Monſ. De Coſſignoy, the inſtant he received accounts of the peace, commanded his troops to quit the trenches. Neither

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the threats nor promiſes of the Nabob could prevent his retiring peaceably to Mahee, a French ſettlement. The neighbourhood of Tellicherry, and the French General was deprived of the bullocks that had before been allowed to him for his artillery, and was obliged to borrow money from the Engliſh to purchaſe others, as well as proviſions for his march. But the meanneſs and perfidy of the Sultan did not ſtop here: he ſolicited the Queen of Cananore to haraſs Monſ. de Coſſigney in his paſſage through her dominions; the French troops, however, after ſurmounting great difficulties, arrived at Mahee, thoroughly diſguſted with the Nabob's ſervice.

Tippoo, obſerving that the Engliſh did not ſlacken in their defence, and convinced that his troops were little capable of bringing the ſiege to a proſperous iſſue, propoſed a ſuſpenſion of arms, which was agreed to on both ſides.

You may eaſily conceive the wretched condition of the garriſon. A great number of men muſt have periſhed during the courſe of ſo long and obſtinate a defence. The ſtones which were diſcharged in ſhowers from the enemy's mortars, kept our troops in perpetual alarm; for there was no place in the Fort where they could be at all under cover. But this was not the greateſt evil they ſuffered:—famine tormented them in a much more cruel manner. After eating their horſes, and all the crows they could catch, they were reduced to ſubſiſt entirely upon rice and water without a grain of ſalt to ſeaſon it. Almoſt all the Sepoys loſt their ſight; and it was not unuſual for a blind corporal to command a blind guard. In the midſt of this diſtreſs they diſcovered a powerful detachment advancing towards the Fort under General Macleod, the ſame officer who commanded us at Paniana. The mere ſight of the ſhips carried

ried joy and courage into all hearts. Signals of diſtreſs were thrown out by the garriſon, and a plan formed to favour the landing of their ſuppoſed deliverers, whom they expected with the moſt anxious impatience. But what was their ſurprize when the fleet, inſtead of anſwering their ſignals, or bringing them the ſo-much-deſired relief, ſtood out to ſea, and left them a prey to their deſpair. The fact is, that General Macleod had received poſitive orders not to offer any hoſtility to Tippoo, if there was the leaſt probability of a peace, and the Nabob would allow him to ſupply the garriſon with proviſions. This permiſſion was readily granted on condition that the proviſions ſhould be brought to the camp of the beſiegers, and be examined by their officers. Macleod, forgetful of the perfidiouſneſs of Tippoo, landed a large quantity of ſalt beef, liquors, and other things, neceſſary for people who were periſhing for want: having deli-

vered all theſe articles to the Nabob's officers, without waiting for Colonel Campbell's acknowledgment of the receipt of them, he ſet ſail for Cananore. Tippoo kept the freſh proviſions and liquors for his own uſe, and chuſing ſome of the worſt and hardeſt beef, ſent it to the beſieged. No uſe whatever could be made of it; but ſuch was the reſolution and courage of our brave countrymen, that not a word eſcaped them of capitulation. From the firſt of them to the laſt, they were determined to die rather than ſurrender themſelves priſoners.

The rice, which had long been their only food, was almoſt expended, when commiſſioners arrived in Tippoo's camp to treat of the peace: they ordered the Colonel to capitulate; but they had great trouble in perſuading him to take that ſtep. The terms of his capitulation were the moſt advantageous poſſible: he ſurrendered, but with all the honours of war.

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He marched out of the Fort which he had ſo long and ſo valiantly defended, with his ſmall arms, his artillery, and all the ſtores and ammunition which belonged to the Engliſh, and embarked the whole on board ſome veſſels that were ready to ſail for Bombay.

Thus terminated the ſiege of Mangalore, of all the events recorded in hiſtory the moſt honourable to the Engliſh name. Never was the defence of a fortreſs conducted with more ſpirit, or with greater marks of patience and fortitude. The ſiege of Gibraltar, which made ſo great a noiſe throughout Europe, was but the play of children in compariſon of this. Where is the merit of defending an impregnable fortreſs? You muſt not, however, imagine that I mean to depreciate General Elliott's merit. He did every thing that his ſituation required; and I have no doubt, from the proofs of good conduct he has already given, that if he had been reduced to greater extremities,

he would have ſuſtained them in a manner worthy of the high truſt repoſed in him.

Campbell did not long ſurvive his glorious defence of Mangalore. The hardſhips and fatigues he had ſuffered in a ſiege which laſted three or four months, had ſo effectually deſtroyed his conſtitution, that it was not in the power of art to reſtore it. The government of Bombay paid him all the honours he deſerved. He had the ſatisfaction to find before he died that he had not ſacrificed himſelf for an ungrateful people. He entered Bombay in the midſt of the grateful acclamations of all the inhabitants of the city, who accompanied him to the houſe where he ended his days. His funeral was magnificent; and the Company has erected a monument to his memory, which, in point of taſte and elegance, is inferior to very few.

I hope that England will not ſuffer itſelf to be out-done by the Eaſt India Company

Company on this occaſion. A nation which expects to be ſerved with honour, and excite a noble emulation in the breaſts of its ſubjects, ſhould never neglect preſerving the fame of its great men by publick monuments.

By the conditions of the treaty of peace which followed immediately after the capitulation of Mangalore, the few forts that we were ſtill maſters of on the coaſt of Malabar, were exchanged for thoſe in the Carnatic, which were in the hands of Tippoo Sultan. You ſee that the expedition under General Mathews, though it had not the happieſt iſſue, nevertheleſs anſwered all the purpoſes we at firſt intended by it. He obliged Tippoo to withdraw his forces from our territories on the coaſt of Coromandel; and the obſtinate reſiſtance of the brave Colonel Campbell gave time for our troops in Tanjore and the Carnatic to be reinforced, and alarm the *great conqueror* for the ſecurity of his extenſive dominions,

dominions. It may with truth be affirmed that our army, and ſtill more the troops which defended Mangalore, alone procured the peace which has lately been concluded with the Nabob of the Myſore.

From Mangalore General Macleod ſet ſail for Cananore, where he diſembarked his troops; and having ſtormed the Fort, found very conſiderable plunder. It is ſaid that he did not ſhew the ſame impartiality and generoſity in the diſtribution of the riches which fell into his hands as endeared him to the army at Paniana. By the articles of the peace, that place was likewiſe ceded to Tippoo.

This is the laſt letter I ſhall write from India. We are juſt going to embark for Europe.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

London, 1786.

I BELIEVE you have received my laſt letter, which is in anſwer to thoſe you addreſſed to me at this place. I am happy that you continue to enjoy good health, and that your affairs proſper to your wiſhes. I am ſenſibly affected at the loſs you have ſuſtained in the perſon of * * * *; he was a man of an excellent diſpoſition; I always admired his diſintereſtedneſs and generoſity; his country has loſt in him an excellent patriot, and you a friend neceſſary to your happineſs. But, my dear ſir, you are not the only perſon who has to complain of the ſtrokes of fate. You are acquainted with the misfortune which has happened in my family. A perſon

to

to whom I was attached, more by the ties of friendſhip than by thoſe of blood, has fallen by the deſtructive ſcythe of death in the ſpring of her life. How many tears have I ſhed for the loſs of that beloved ſiſter! Ah! my friend! how little did ſhe reſemble the generality of her ſex! Without art, and without diſguiſe, ſhe poſſeſſed every quality which could captivate the heart, and make a worthy man happy. How much pleaſure did I promiſe myſelf in diſcourſing with her on the manners, cuſtoms, and peculiarities, of the different nations I have viſited. What delight would have filled my boſom to have ſeen a tear drop from her on my ſufferings in priſon, and the various evils which have encompaſſed me ever ſince my departure from Portſmouth. I feel that my ſiſter was neceſſary to my happineſs!—Excuſe this effuſion of weakneſs; it ſhall be the laſt.

I now proceed to acquaint you with the

the circumſtances of my paſſage to Europe.

We were ſo long in the Bay of Bengal that we had every reaſon to expect we ſhould be in want of freſh water before we ſhould reach the Cape. On this account we determined to put into the Iſle of France. The governors of this place have not always permitted ſtrangers to land, but we were allowed that indulgence, and had leave beſides to go wherever we choſe, except to the fortifications. We had no great difficulty in conforming to theſe rules.

The iſland is eſteemed the moſt formidable place in the world; but we could diſcover nothing which appeared like a good piece of fortification. It is ſurpriſing that the French ſhould have neglected a place of ſo much conſequence to them, for it is the only ſettlement, to the eaſtward of the Cape of Good Hope, where they can refit their ſhips. A baſon has lately been conſtructed here

here in which thirteen or fourteen ſhips may lie in ſecurity. The capital town is not protected by any citadel or other port, and yet is the *depot* where all the ſtores, as well naval as military, are laid up. Though art has done nothing to ſecure the iſland from invaſion, it would, nevertheleſs, be difficult to make a complete conqueſt of it. The country, at two or three miles diſtance from the ſea, is encloſed by mountains of a prodigious height; one only paſs leads to the inland part, which is ſo narrow that three hundred men could defend it againſt the united armies of all Europe. The capital might eaſily be taken becauſe it lies *without* thoſe great ramparts which have been raiſed by the hand of Nature. There is no obſtacle to the landing of troops under cover of a few frigates a mile to the eaſtward of the town. When once the diſembarking of an army had been effected both parties

would be on equal terms, except that the beſieged would have the choice of the ground; but the ardour which uſually fires thoſe that attack might perhaps counterbalance this advantage. The magazines might then be deſtroyed, and the invaders reimbark without being expoſed to ſuffer any great loſs. Thus would the French be deprived of all their reſources in the Eaſt, and pay a dear price for their unaccountable neglect of a place of ſo much importance.

The ſoil of the iſland is rich and fruitful, and the condition of the cattle proves the excellence of the paſture: the number of theſe uſeful animals is however very ſmall, and the graſs which covers the plains and the mountains is periſhing on the ground, while the inhabitants have not half the quantity of animal food neceſſary for their ſubſiſtance. Neither the inconvenience of wanting ſo important an article, nor

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the dearneſs of proviſions, can induce them to increaſe the number of their cattle. They pretend that the climate, though highly favourable to man, is deleterious to beaſts. This aſſertion is founded on the experience of the laſt twenty years, during which they have two or three times loſt almoſt all the oxen of the country by a peſtilential diſtemper. But how often do ſuch diſorders appear among the horned cattle in Europe? I do not ſee why they ſhould be more frequent in this iſland than elſewhere, for it is ſituated in the current of the trade of winds, and of courſe the air ſeldom ſtagnates. In every reſpect its ſituation is as advantageous as that of Madagaſcar, from whence it draws all the additional cattle required for its conſumption.

If the inhabitants would pay a little attention to their cattle, ſeparating the ſick from the ſound, and making uſe of other ſimple expedients, which are never

never known to fail in Europe, I have no doubt that their own paſtures would ſupply them with more oxen than they have occaſion for. The number they rear, though inconſiderable, are in ſuch good condition as makes it evident that the climate cannot have the bad effects aſcribed to it by the inhabitants.

Poultry, fruits, and vegetables, are rather plentiful, but bear ſo high a price, that we often wiſhed we had not gone on ſhore.

Some time ago the cultivation of ſpices was introduced, and with a little encouragement from the government it would ſucceed extremely well. Excellent wines might alſo be made here if the planters were properly protected. But the government of the mother country extends its influence over the colonies, and cruſhes every kind of induſtry. To convince you of the truth of this aſſertion I muſt give you ſome inſtances of the conduct held by Monſieur De Buſſy,

the French Governor General in India during the laſt war. He was no ſooner arrived at his government than he ſeized upon ſome thouſand ſlaves that belonged to a merchant who kept them employed in a manner moſt beneficial to the public, and advantageous to himſelf, and who was obliged to give them up for a very ſmall conſideration. The ſame individual was owner of two privateers, one of forty and the other of twenty guns; they were manned and fitted out by himſelf at an immenſe expence, and were ready to ſail when Buſſy arrived in the iſland: this arbitrary Governor ſtopped them, and preſſed their crews into the King's ſervice, though the French ſhips of war were already over-manned. Both the veſſels were left to rot upon the beach, and the unfortunate merchant, unable to ſtand this ſecond ſtroke of oppreſſion, became a bankrupt, and took refuge with the Engliſh: the greater part of the town, which was

connected in trade with him, was involved in his ruin. This is the natural conſequence of ſuch meaſures: for if a tradeſman is deprived of his workmen, or an owner of a veſſel of his crew, he and all that depend on him muſt inevitably be ruined. Yet it is truly aſtoniſhing that all the inhabitants joined in cenſuring the bankrupt, and no one thought of ſtigmatizing the Governor. We had great difficulty in convincing ſome of the moſt rational among them that the merchant deſerved their pity, and that Buſſy was a rogue. They are, in fact, ſo much accuſtomed to ſimilar ſcenes, that they do not even think of murmuring at the tyrannical government which permits them.

In ſpite of theſe inſtances of oppreſſion one may diſcover among the people extraordinary exertions to improve their condition, and with the ſlighteſt encouragement from the court of Verſailles, the iſland would ſoon become a flouriſh-

ing colony. Society is on a very eaſy footing: the ladies, however, are far from poſſeſſing that graceful eaſe and vivacity which diſtinguiſhes the females of their mother country from thoſe of other nations; but they have an enchanting affability and ſweetneſs in their manner, which would have been fatal to the peace of many of us if we had remained much longer in the iſland.

The Iſle of Bourbon is not far from the Iſle of France, and is ſaid to be conſiderably more fruitful as well as more agreeable, but the want of a good harbour renders it of much leſs importance. Our paſſage to St. Helena was extremely pleaſant; we ſuffered none of that ſtormy weather which is ſo much dreaded in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope.

I never yet beheld ſo barren and inhoſpitable a ſpot as St. Helena. The ſhore, all round the iſland, is three or four hundred feet in perpendicular height,

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and conſiſts of a ſolid rock, which bears no kind of verdure. The inland parts are interſected by chains of lofty naked mountains, which do not even bear graſs but in the rainy ſeaſon. After a week of dry weather the greater part of the cattle muſt be killed, or left to ſtarve: but individuals are not left to act in this reſpect as they may chuſe; for no one can ſlaughter any of his oxen without the Governor's permiſſion; becauſe a certain number are always kept for the ſupply of the Company's ſhips, and the reſt are diſtributed equally among all the inhabitants. Sheep, goats, and poultry, are not very numerous, but there is almoſt always plenty of excellent fiſh. Yams are generally uſed in the iſland as a ſuccedaneum for bread. The fruits are extremely good, but in quantity ſufficient only to make one wiſh they were more plentiful. This is almoſt the whole produce of the iſland; for beef, flour, and

every other neceſſary, is imported from England.

This place coſts the Company no more than thirty thouſand pounds ſterling *per annum*; for which moderate ſum their fleets have the convenience of taking in refreſhments on their return to Europe: and further, as care is taken to forward to St. Helena all the intelligence poſſible in times of war, the Indiamen have frequently received ſuch information as has enabled them to ſteer clear of an enemy, and get home in ſafety.

But though Nature has denied many of her bleſſings to the inhabitants of this iſland, ſhe has favoured them with one which compenſates for the want of all others.—Their women have every charm, every good quality, which can ſoothe the cares of life, and make thoſe who poſſeſs them forget the unpleaſantneſs of ſuch a confined ſituation. The little experience they have of the manners of the world, keeps them in a ſtate of innocence

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and natural ſimplicity which is ſeen in no other country. So many graces and charms made the livelieſt impreſſion on all our hearts; and we could not refrain from dropping a tear, and feeling the moſt poignant anguiſh, when we parted from theſe amiable ladies to continue our voyage to Europe.

hope to ſee you ſoon. Adieu.

OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ATIC

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 June, 2016